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# LETTERS

AND

# LITERARY REMAINS

OF

# EDWARD FITZGERALD.

VOL. III.

*"Welcome, Prince of Horsemen, welcome!*
*Ride a field, and strike the Ball!*

# LETTERS

AND

# LITERARY REMAINS

OF

# EDWARD FITZGERALD

EDITED BY

WILLIAM ALDIS WRIGHT

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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# THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

TAKEN FROM CALDERON'S

## EL MÁGICO PRODIGIOSO.

I made a fuller correction of *all* these Calderon Plays, except the "Life's a Dream," which I dare not look at. But I have somewhere mislaid—if not destroyed—the copies—as also, I believe, of Agamemnon, and Polonius.

E. F. G. *November*, 1882.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

| | |
|---|---|
| AURELIO, | *Viceroy of Antioch.* |
| LELIO, | *his Son.* |
| FABIO, | *a chief Officer in Antioch.* |
| FLORO, | *his Son.* |
| LISANDRO, | *an aged Christian.* |
| JUSTINA, | *his Daughter.* |
| LIVIA, | *their Servant.* |
| CIPRIANO, | *a Professor of Learning.* |
| EUSEBIO, JULIAN, | *his Scholars.* |
| LUCIFER, | *the Evil Spirit.* |

CITIZENS, SOLDIERS, &c.

# THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN.

## ACT I.

SCENE I. *A retired Grove near Antioch.—Enter* CIPRIANO, EUSEBIO, *and* JULIAN, *with books.*

*Cipr.* THIS is the place, this the sequester'd spot
Where, in the flower about and leaf above,
I find the shade and quiet that I love,
And oft resort to rest a wearied wing;
And here, good lads, leave me alone, but not
Lonely, companion'd with the books you bring:
That while the city from all open doors
Abroad her gaping population pours,
To swell the triumph of the pomp divine
That with procession, sacrifice, and song
Convoys her tutelary Zeus along
For installation in his splendid shrine;
I, flying from the hubbub of the throng
That overflows her thoroughfares and streets,
And here but faintly touches and retreats,

In solitary meditation may
Discount at ease my summer holiday.
You to the city back, and take your fill
Of festival, and all that with the time's,
And your own youth's, triumphant temper chimes;
Leaving me here alone to mine; until
Yon golden idol reaching overhead,
Dragg'd from his height, and bleeding out his fires
Along the threshold of the west, expires,
And drops into the sea's sepulchral lead.

*Eusebio.* Nay, sir, think once again, and go with us,
Or, if you will, without us; only, go;
Lest Antioch herself as well as we
Cry out upon a maim'd solemnity.

*Julian.* Oh, how I wish I had not brought the books,
Which you have ever at command—indeed,
Without them, all within them carry—here—
Garner'd—aloft—

*Euseb.* In truth, if stay you will,
I scarcely care to go myself.

*Cipr.* Nay, nay,
Good lads, good boys, all thanks, and all the more,
If you but leave it simply as I say.
You have been somewhat over-tax'd of late,
And want some holiday.

*Julian.* Well, sir, and you?

*Cipr.* Oh, I am of that tougher age and stuff
Whose relaxation is its work. Besides,
Think you the poor Professor needs no time
For solitary tillage of his brains,
Before such shrewd ingatherers as you
Come on him for their harvest unawares?
Away, away! and like good citizens

Help swell the general joy with two such faces
As such as mine would only help to cloud.
*Euseb.* Nay, sir—
*Cipr.* But I say, Yea, sir! and my scholars
By yea and nay as I would have them do.
*Euseb.* Well, then, farewell, sir.
*Cipr.* Farewell, both of you.
[*Exeunt* EUSEBIO *and* JULIAN.
Away with them, light heart and wingèd heel,
Soon leaving drowsy Pallas and her dull
Professor out of sight, and out of mind.
And yet not so perhaps; and, were it so,
Why, better with the frolic herd forgetting
All in the youth and sunshine of the day
Than ruminating in the shade apart.
Well, each his way and humour; some to lie
Like Nature's sickly children in her lap,
While all the stronger brethren are at play;
When ev'n the mighty Mother's self would seem
Drest out in all her festival attire
In honour of the universal Sire
Whom Antioch as for her own to-day
Propitiates. Hark, the music!—Speed, good lads,
Or you will be too late. Ah, needless caution!
Ev'n now already half way down the hill,
Spurr'd by the very blood within their veins,
They catch up others, who catching from them
The fire they re-inflame, the flying troop
Consuming fast to distance in a cloud
Of dust themselves have kindled, whirls away
Where the shrill music blown above the walls
Tells of the solemn work begun within.
Why, ev'n the shrieking pipe that pierces here,

Shows me enough of all the long procession
Of white-robed priest and chanting chorister,
The milkwhite victim crown'd, and high aloft
The chariot of the nodding deity,
Whose brazen eyes that as their sockets see,
Stare at his loyal votaries. Ah me!—
Well, here too happier, if not wiser, those
Who, with the heart of unsuspicious youth,
Take up tradition from their father's hands
To pass it on to others in their turn;
But leaving me behind them in the race
With less indeed than little appetite
For ceremonies, and to gods, like these,
That, let the rabble shout for as they please,
Another sort begin to shake their heads at,
And heav'n to rumble with uneasily
As flinging out some antiquated gear.
So wide, since subtle Greece the pebble flung
Into the sleeping pool of superstition,
Its undulation spreads to other shores,
And saps at the foundation of our schools.
—Why, this last Roman, Caius Plinius—
Who drawing nature's growth and history
Down to her root and first cause—What says he?—
Ev'n at the very threshold of his book
A definition laying, over which
The clumsy mimic idols of our shrines
Stumble and break to pieces—oh, here it is—
"*Quapropter effigiem Dei formamque quærere,*
*Imbecillitatis humanæ reor*"—
"All visible effigies of God
But types of human imbecility."—
But what has Antioch to say to that,

Who at such cost of marble and of gold
Has built the very temple into which
She drags her tutelary Zeus to-day?—
Zeus veritable God, this effigy
Is none of him at all! But then, alas!
This same *Quapropter* follows a premiss
That elbows out Zeus with his effigy.
For—as I gather from his foreign word—
Wherever, or Whatever, Deity—
*Si modo est alius*—if distinct at all
From universal Nature—it must be
One all-informing, individual Whole,
All eye, all ear, all self, all sense, all soul—
Whereas this Zeus of ours, though Chief indeed—
Nay, *because* chief of other gods than he,
Comes from this Roman's hand no God at all!—
This is a knotty question.

*Lucifer* (*without*). Nor while I
Tangle, for you, good doctor, to untie.

*Cipr.* What! The poor bird scarce settled on the bough,
Before the fowler after him! How now?
Who's there?

*Lucifer* (*entering habited as a Merchant*). A stranger;
therefore pardon him,
Who somehow parted from his company,
And lost in his own thoughts (a company
You know one cannot lose so easily)
Has lost his way to Antioch.

*Cipr.* Antioch!
Whose high white towers and temples ev'n from here
Challenge the sight, and scarce a random line
Traced by a wandering foot along the grass
But thither leads for centre.

*Luc.* The old story,
Of losing what one should have found on earth
By staring after something in the clouds—
Is it not so?
*Cipr.* To-day too, when so many
Are flocking thither to the festival,
Whose current might have told—and taken—you
The way you wish'd to go.
*Luc.* To say the truth,
My lagging here behind as much I think
From a distaste for that same festival
(Of which they told us as we came along)
As inadvertency—my way of life
Busied enough, if not too much, with men
To care for them in crowd on holidays,
When business stands, and neither they nor I
Gaping about can profit one another;
And therefore, by your leave—but only so—
I fain would linger in this quiet place
Till evening, under whose dusky cloak
I may creep unobserved to Antioch.
*Cipr.* (*aside*). Humane address, at least. And why should I
Grudge him the quiet I myself desire?—
(*Aloud*) Nay, this is public ground—for you, as me,
To use it at your pleasure.
*Luc.* Still with yours—
Whom by your sober suit and composed looks,
And by this still society of books,
I take to be a scholar—
*Cipr.* And if so?
*Luc.* Ill brooking idle company.
*Cipr.* Perhaps;

But that no wiser traveller need be—
And, if I judge of you as you of me,
Though with no book hung out for sign before,
Perchance a scholar too.

*Luc.* If so, more read
In men than books, as travellers are wont.
But, if myself but little of a bookman,
Addicted much to scholars' company,
Of whom I meet with many on my travels,
And who, you know, themselves are living books.

*Cipr.* And you have travell'd much?

*Luc.* Ay, little else,
One may say, since I came into the world
Than going up and down it: visiting
As many men and cities as Ulysses,
From first his leaving Troy without her crown,
Along the charmèd coasts he pass'd, with all
The Polyphemes and Circes in the way,
Right to the Pillars where his ship went down.
Nay, and yet further, where the dark Phœnician
Digs the pale metal which the sun scarce deigns
With a slant glance to ripen in earth's veins:
Or back again so close beneath his own
Proper dominion, that the very mould
Beneath he kindles into proper gold,
And strikes a living Iris into stone.

*Cipr.* One place, however, where Ulysses was,
I think you have not been to—where he saw
Those he left dead upon the field of Troy
Come one by one to lap the bowl of blood
Set for them in the fields of Asphodel.

*Luc.* Humph!—as to that, a voyage which if all
Must take, less need to brag of; or perchance

Ulysses, or his poet, apt to err
About the people and their doings there—
But let the wonders in the world below
Be what they may; enough in that above
For any sober curiosity,
Without one's diving down before one's time:
Not only countries now as long ago
Known, till'd, inhabited, and civilized;
As Egypt, Greece, and Rome, with all their arts,
Trades, customs, polities, and history:
But deep in yet scarce navigated seas,
Countries uncouth, with their peculiar growths
Of vegetation or of life; where men
Are savage as the soil they never till;
Or never were, or were so long ago,
Their very story blotted from the page
Of earth they wrote it on; unless perchance
From riot-running nature's overgrowth
Of swarming vegetation, peeps some scarce
Decypherable monument, which yet,
To those who find the key, perchance has told
Stories of men, more mighty men, of old,
Or of the gods themselves who walk'd the world
When with the dews of first creation wet.

*Cipr.* Oh knowledge from the fountain freshly drawn
Without the tedious go-between of books!
But with fresh soul and senses unimpair'd
What from the pale reflexion of report
We catch at second hand, and much beside
That in our solitary cells we miss.

*Luc.* Ay, truly we that travel see strange things,
Though said to tell of stranger; some of us,
Deceived ourselves, or seeking to deceive,

With prodigies and monsters which the world,
As wide and full of wonders as it is,
Never yet saw, I think, nor ever will:
Which yet your scholars use for clay and straw
Of which to build your mighty folios—
For instance, this same bulky Roman here,
Whose leaf you turn'd, I doubt impatiently,
When my intrusion rustled in the leaves—

*Cipr.* Hah! But how knew you—

*Luc.* Nay, if some stray words
Of old familiar Latin met my ear
As I stood hesitating.

*Cipr.* (*holding up the book*). This at least
You read then?

*Luc.* One might say before 'twas written.

*Cipr.* But how so?

*Luc.* Oh, this same sufficient Roman,
What is he but another of the many
Who having seen a little and heard more
That others pick'd as loosely up before,
Constructs his little bird's-nest universe
Of shreds and particles of false and true
Cemented with some thin philosophy,
All filch'd from others, as from him to be
By the next pilfering philosopher,
Till blown away before the rising wind
Of true discovery, or dropt to nothing
After succeeding seasons of neglect.

*Cipr.* (*aside*). A strange man this—sharp wit and biting word.
(*Aloud*) Yet surely Man, after so many ages
Of patient observation of the world
He lives in, is entitled by the wit

Vouchsafed him by the Maker of the world
To draw into some comprehensive whole
The stray particulars.

*Luc.* Ay, and forsooth,
Not only the material world he lives in;
But, having of this undigested heap
Composed a World, must make its Maker too,
Of abstract attributes, of each of which
Still more unsure than of the palpable,
Forthwith he draws to some consistent One
The accumulated ignorance of each
In so compact a plausibility
As light to carry as it was to build.

*Cipr.* But, since (I know not how) you hit upon
The question I was trying when you came;
And, spite of your disclaiming scholarship,
Seem versed in that which occupies the best—
If Pliny blunder with his single God,
As in our twilight reason well he may,
Confess however that a Deity
Plural and self-discordant, as he says,
Is yet more like frail man's imagination,
Who, for his own necessities and lusts,
Splits up and mangles the Divine idea
To pieces, as he wants a piece of each;
Not only gods for all the elements
Divided into land, and sea, and sky;
But gods of health, wealth, love, and fortune; nay,
Of war and murder, rape and robbery;
Men of their own worse nature making gods
To serve the very vices that suggest them,
Which yet upon their fellow-men they visit
(Else were an end of human polity)

With chain and fine and banishment and death.
So that unless man made such gods as these,
Then are these gods worse than the man they made.
And for the attributes, which though indeed
You gibe at us for canvassing, yourself
Must grant—as whether one or manifold,
Deity in its simplest definition
Must be at least eternal—

*Luc.* Well?—

*Cipr.* Yet those
Who stuff Olympus are so little that,
That Zeus himself, the sovereign of all,
Barely escaped devouring at his birth
By his own father, who anticipated
And found some such hard measure for himself;
And as for Zeus' own progeny—some born
Of so much baser matter than his brain,
As from his eggs, which the all-mighty swan
Impregnated, and mortal Leda laid;
And whose two chicken-deities once hatch'd
Now live and die on each alternate day.

*Luc.* Ay, but if much of this be allegory
In which the wisdom of antiquity
Veils the pure Deity from eyes profane—

*Cipr.* —Deity taking arms against itself
Under Troy walls, wounding and wounded—ay,
And, trailing heavenly ichor from their wounds,
So help'd by others from the field to one
Who knew the leech's art themselves did not.

*Luc.* Softly—if not to swear to allegory,
Still less to all the poets sing of heaven,
High up Parnassus as they think to sit.

*Cipr.* But these same poets, therefore sacred call'd,

They are who these same allegories spin
Which time and fond tradition consecrate;
What might have been of the divine within
So overgrown with folly and with sin
As but a spark of God would such impure
Assimilation with himself abjure,
Which yet with all the nostril that he may
Zeus snuffs from Antioch's sacrifice to-day.
Besides, beyond the reach of allegory
The gods themselves in their own oracles
Doubly themselves convict—
As when they urge two nations on to war,
By promising the victory to each;
Whereby on one side their omniscience
Suffers, as their all-goodness on the other.

*Luc.* What if such seeming contradictions aim
Where human understanding cannot reach?
But granting for the sake of argument,
And for that only, what you now premise;
What follows?

*Cipr.* Why, that if, as Pliny writes,
Deity by its very definition
Be one, eternal, absolute, all wise,
All good, omnipotent, all ear, all eyes,
Incapable of disintegration—
If this be Deity indeed—

*Luc.* Then what?

*Cipr.* Simply—that we in Antioch know him not.

*Luc.* Rash leap to necessary non-conclusion
From a premiss that quarrels with itself
More than the deity it would impugn;
For if one God eternal and all wise,
Omnipotent to do as to devise,

Whence this disorder and discordance in—
Not only this material universe,
That seems created only to be rack'd
By the rebellion of its elements,
In earthquake and tempestuous anarchy—
But also in the human microcosm
You say created to reflect it all?
For Deity, all goodness as all wise,
Why create man the thing of lust and lies
You say reflects himself in his false god?—
By modern oracle no more convicted
Of falsehood, than by that first oracle
Which first creation settled in man's heart.
No, if you must define, premise, conclude,
Away with all the coward squeamishness
That dares not face the universe it questions;
Blinking the evil and antagonism
Into its very constitution breathed
By him who, but himself to quarrel with,
Quarrels as might the many with each other.
Or would you be yourself one with yourself,
Catch hold of such as Epicurus' skirt,
Who, desperately confounded this confusion
Of matter, spirit, good and evil, yea,
Godhead itself, into a universe
That is created, roll'd along, and ruled,
By no more wise direction than blind Chance.
Trouble yourself no more with disquisition
That by sad, slow, and unprogressive steps
Of wasted soul and body lead to nothing:
And only sure of life's short breathing-while,
And knowing that the gods who threaten us
With after-vengeance of the very crimes

They revel in themselves, are nothing more
Than the mere coinage of our proper brain
To cheat us of our scanty pleasure here
With terror of a harsh account hereafter;—
Eat, drink, be merry; crown yourselves with flowers
About as lasting as the heads they garland;
And snatching what you can of life's poor feast,
When summon'd to depart, with no ill grace,
Like a too greedy guest, cling to the table
Whither the generations that succeed
Press forward famish'd for their turn to feed.
Nay, or before your time self-surfeited,
Wait not for nature's signal to be gone,
But with the potion of the spotted weed,
That peradventure wild beside your door
For some such friendly purpose cheaply grows,
Anticipate too tardy nature's call:
Ev'n as one last great Roman of them all
Dismiss'd himself betimes into the sum
Of universe; not nothing to become;
For that can never cease that was before;
But not that sad Lucretius any more.

*Cipr.* Oh, were it not that sometimes through the dark,
That walls us all about, a random ray
Breaks in to tell one of a better day
Beyond—

*Enter* LELIO *and* FLORO, *as about to fight.*

*Lelio.* Enough—these branches that exclude the sun
Defy all other inquisition.
No need of further way.

*Floro.* Nor further word;
Draw, sir, at once—

*Lelio.* Nay, parry that yourself
Which waited not your summons to be drawn.
*Cipr.* Lelio, and Floro?
*Floro.* What, will the leaves blab?
*Lelio.* And with their arms arrest a just revenge?
*Cipr.* And well indeed may trees begin to talk,
When men as you go babbling.
*Floro.* Whoso speaks
And loves his life, hold back.
*Lelio.* I know the voice,
But dazzled with the darkness—Cipriano?
*Cipr.* Ay; Cipriano, sure enough; as you
Lelio and Floro.
*Floro.* Well, let that suffice,
And leave us as you find us.
*Cipr.* No, not yet—
*Floro.* Not yet!
*Lelio.* Good Cipriano—
*Cipr.* Till I know
How it has come to pass that two such friends,
Each of the noblest blood in Antioch,
Are here to shed it by each other's hands.
*Lelio.* Sudden surprise, and old respect for you,
Suspend my sword a moment, Cipriano,
That else—
*Floro.* Stand back, stand back! You are a scholar,
And better versed in logic than the laws
Of honour; and perhaps have yet to learn
That when two noblemen have drawn the sword,
One only must return it to the sheath.
*Lelio.* 'Tis so indeed—once more, stand off.
*Cipr.* And once more
Back, both of you, say I; if of your lives

Regardless, not of mine, which thus, unarm'd,
I fling between your swords—
Lelio, I look to you—Floro, as ever
Somewhat hot-headed and thrasonical—
Or do you hold with him the scholar's gown
Has smother'd all the native soldiery
That saucy so-call'd honour to itself
Alone mis-arrogates? You are deceived:
I am like you by birth a gentleman,
Under like obligation to the laws
Of that true honour, which my books indeed
May help distinguish from its counterfeit,
But, older as I am, have yet not chill'd
From catching fire at any just affront—
And let me tell you this too—those same books,
Ancient and modern, tell of many a hand
That, turning most assiduously the leaf,
When the time came, could wield as well the sword.
I am unarm'd: but you, with all your swords,
I say you shall not turn them on each other
Till you have told me what the quarrel is;
Which after hearing if I own for one
That honour may not settle with good word,
I pledge my own to leave it to the sword.
Now, Lelio!—

*Lelio.* One answer does for both:
He loves where I love.

*Floro.* No—I thus much more—
He dares to love where I had loved before;
Betrayèd friendship adding to the score
Of upstart love.

*Lelio.* You hear him, Cipriano?
And after such a challenge—

*Cipr.* Yet a moment.
As there are kinds of honour, so of love—
And ladies—
*Lelio.* Cipriano, Cipriano!
One friend my foe for daring love where I,
Let not another, daring doubt that he
Honours himself in so dishonouring me—
*Floro.* Slanting your sharp divisions on a jewel
That if the sun turn'd all his beams upon
He could not find, or make, a flaw—
*Cipr.* Nor I then,
With far less searching scrutiny than Phœbus—
I am to understand then, such a fair
Jewel as either would in wedlock wear.
*Floro.* And rather die than let another dare.
*Cipr.* Enough, enough! of Lelio's strange logic,
And Floro's more intelligible rant,
And back to sober metaphor. Which of you
Has this fair jewel turn'd her light upon?
*Floro* (*after a pause*). Why, who would boast—
*Lelio.* Indeed, how could she be
The very pearl of chastity she is,
Turn'd she her glances either left or right?
*Cipr.* Which therefore each, as he obliquely steals,
Counts on as given him only—
*Floro.* To have done
With metaphor and logic, what you will,
So as we fall to work;
Or if you must have reason, this, I say,
Resolves itself to a short syllogism—
Whether she give or we presume upon—
If one of us devote himself to win her,
How dares another cross him?

*Cipr.* But if she
Not only turn to neither, but still worse,
Or better, turn from both?
*Lelio.* But love by long devotion may be won,
That only one should offer—
*Floro.* And that one
Who first—
*Lelio.* Who first!—
*Cipr.* And all this while, forsooth,
The lady, of whose purity one test
Is her unblemish'd unpublicity,
Is made a target for the common tongue
Of Antioch to shoot reproaches at
For stirring up two noblemen to blood.
From which she only can escape, forsooth,
By choosing one of two she cares not for
At once; or else, to mend the matter, when
He comes to claim her by the other's blood.
*Lelio.* At least she will not hate him, live or dead,
Who staked his life upon her love.
*Cipr.* Small good
To him who lost the stake; and he that won—
Will she begin to love whom not before
For laying unloved blood upon her door;
Or, if she ever loved at all, love more?
Is this fair logic, or of one who knows
No more of woman's honour than of man's?
Come, come, no more of beating round the bush.
You know how I have known and loved you both,
As brothers—say as sons—upon the score
Of some few years and some few books read more—
Though two such fiery fine young gentlemen,
Put up your swords and be good boys again,

Deferring to your ancient pedagogue;
If cold by time and studies, as you say,
Then fitter for a go-between in love,
And warm at least in loyalty to you.
These jewels—to take up the metaphor
Until you choose to drop it of yourselves,—
These jewels have their caskets, I suppose—
Kindred and circumstance, I mean—
*Lelio.* Oh such
As by their honourable poverty
Do more than doubly set their jewel off!
*Cipr.* Ev'n so? And may not one, who, you agree,
Proof-cold against suspicion of the kind,
Be so far trusted, as, if not to see,
To hear, at least, of where, and how, enshrined?
*Floro.* I know not what to answer. How say you?
*Lelio.* Relying on your honour and tried love—
Justina, daughter of the old Lisandro.
*Cipr.* I know them; her if scarcely, yet how far
Your praises short of her perfections are;
Him better, by some little service done
That rid him of a greater difficulty,
And would again unlock his door to me—
—And who knows also, if you both agree,
Her now closed lips; if but a sigh between
May tell which way the maiden heart may lean?
*Floro.* Again, what say you, Lelio?
*Lelio.* I, for one,
Content with that decision.
*Floro.* Be it so.
*Cipr.* Why, after all, behold how luckily
You stumbled on this rock in honour's road,
That serves instead for Cupid's stepping-stone.

And when the knightly courage of you both
Was all at fault to hammer out the way,
Who knows but some duenna-doctor may?
And will—if but like reasonable men,
Not angry boys, you promise to keep sheathed
Your swords, while from her father or herself
I gather, from a single sigh perhaps,
To which, if either, unaware she turns;
Provided, if to one, the other yield;
But if to neither, both shall quit the field.
What say you both to this?

*Lelio.* Ay—I for one.

*Floro.* And I; provided on the instant done.

*Cipr.* No better time than now, when, as I think,
The city, with her solemn uproar busy,
Shuts her we have to do with close within.
But you must come along with me, for fear
Your hands go feeling for your swords again
If left together: and besides to know
The verdict soon as spoken.

*Lelio.* Let us go. [*Exeunt.*

*Lucifer* (*re-appearing*). Ay, Cipriano, faster than you think;
For I will lend you wings to burn yourself
In the same taper they are singed withal.—
By the quick feelers of iniquity
That from hell's mouth reach through this lower world,
And tremble to the lightest touch of mischief,
Warn'd of an active spirit hereabout
Of the true God inquisitive, and restless
Under the false by which I rule the world,
Here am I come to test it for myself.
And lo! two fools have put into my hand

The snare that, wanting most, I might have miss'd;
That shall not him alone en-mesh, but *her*
Whom I have long and vainly from the ranks
Striv'n to seduce of Him, the woman-born,
Who is one day to bruise the serpent's head—
So is it written; but meanwhile my hour
On earth is not accomplish'd, and I fain
Of this detested race would hinder all
From joining in the triumph of my fall
Whom I may hinder; and of these, these twain;
Each other by each other snaring; yea,
Either at once the other's snare and prey.
Oh, my good doctor, you must doubt, you must,
And take no more the good old gods on trust;
To Antioch then away; but not so fast
But I shall be before you, starting last. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. *A Room in* LISANDRO'S *house.—Enter* LISANDRO, JUSTINA, *and* LIVIA.

*Justina.* At length the day draws in.
*Lisandro.* And in with it
The impious acclamation that all day,
Block up our doors and windows as we may,
Insults our faith, and doubly threatens it.
Is all made fast, Justina?
*Just.* All shall be, sir,
When I have seen you safely to your rest.
*Lis.* You know how edict after edict aim'd
By Rome against the little band of Christ—
And at a time like this, the people drunk
With idol-ecstasy—
*Just.* Alas, alas!

*Lis.* Oh, gladly would I scatter these last drops
That now so scarcely creep along my veins,
And these thin locks that tremble o'er the grave,
In such a martyrdom as swept to heav'n
The holy Paul who planted, and all those
Who water'd here the true and only faith,
Were 't not for thee, for fear of thee, Justina,
Drawing you down at once into my doom,
Or leaving you behind, alone, to hide
From insult and suspicion worse than death—
I dare not think of it. Make fast; keep close;
And then, God's will be done! You know we lie
Under a double danger.

*Just.* How so, sir?

*Lis.* Aurelio and Fabio, both, you know,
So potent in the city, and but now
Arm'd with a freshly whetted sword of vengeance
Against the faith, but double-edged on us,
Should they but know, as know they must, their sons
Haunting the doors of this suspected house.

*Just.* Alas, alas!
That I should draw this danger on your head!
Which yet you know—

*Lis.* I know, I know—God knows,
My darling daughter; but that chaste reserve
Serves but to quicken beauty with a charm
They find not in the wanton Venus here:
Drawn as they are by those withdrawing eyes
Irradiate from a mother's, into whose
The very eyes of the Redeemer look'd,
And whom I dare not haste to join in heav'n
At cost of leaving thee defenceless here.

*Just.* Sufficient for the day! And now the day

Is done. Come to your chamber—lean on me—
Livia and I will see that all is fast;
And, that all seen to, ere we sleep ourselves,
Come to your bedside for your blessing. Hark!
Knocking ev'n now! See to it, Livia.
(*She leads out Lisandro, and returns.*)
Oh, well I got my father to his chamber!
What is it?—

*Livia.* One would see your father, madam.

*Just.* At such an hour! He cannot, Livia;
You know, the poor old man is gone to rest—
Tell him—

*Livia.* If not your father, then yourself,
On matter that he says concerns you both.

*Just.* Me too!—Oh surely neither of the twain
We both so dread?

*Livia.* No, madam; rather, one
I think that neither need have cause to fear,—
Cipriano.

*Just.* Cipriano! The great scholar,
Who did my father service, as I think,
And now may mean another; and God knows
How much, or quickly, needed!

*Livia.* So he says.

*Just.* What shall I do! Will not to-morrow—

*Cipriano* (*entering*). Oh, lady,
You scarce can wonder more than I myself
At such a visit, and at such an hour,
Only let what I come to say excuse
The coming, and so much unmannerly.

*Just.* My father is withdrawn, sir, for the night,
Never more wanting rest; I dare not rouse him,
And least of all with any troubled news.

Will not to-morrow—
*Cipr.* What I have to say
Best told to night, at once; and not the less
Since you alone, whom chiefly it concerns,
Are here to listen.
*Just.* I!—Well, sir, relying
On your grave reputation as a scholar,
And on your foregone favour to my father,
If I should dare to listen—
*Cipr.* And alone?
*Just.* Livia, leave us. [*Exit* Livia.
*Cipr.* Oh, lady—oh, Justina—
(Thus stammers the ambassador of love
In presence of its sovereign)—
You must—cannot but—know how many eyes
Those eyes have wounded—
*Just.* Nay, sir,—
*Cipr.* Nay, but hear.
I do not come for idle compliment,
Nor on my own behalf; but in a cause
On which hang life and death as well as love.
Two of the noblest youths in Antioch,
Lelio and Floro—Nay, but hear me out:
Mine, and till now almost from birth each other's
Inseparable friends, now deadly foes
For love of you—
*Just.* Oh, sir!
*Cipr.* I have but now
Parted their swords in mortal quarrel cross'd.
*Just.* Oh, that was well.
*Cipr.* I think, for several sakes—
Their own, their fathers', even Antioch's,
That would not lose one of so choice a pair;

And, I am sure you think so, lady, yours,
So less than covetous of public talk,
And least of all at such a fearful cost.
*Just.* Oh, for all sakes all thanks!
*Cipr.* Yet little due
For what so lightly done, and it may be
So insufficiently; this feud not stopt—
Suspended only, on a single word—
Which now at this unseasonable hour
I stand awaiting from the only lips
That can allay the quarrel they have raised.
*Just.* Alas, why force an answer from my lips
So long implied in silent disregard?
*Cipr.* Yet, without which, like two fierce dogs, but more
Exasperated by the holding back,
They will look for it in each other's blood.
*Just.* And think, poor men, to find their answer there!
Oh, sir, you are the friend, the friend of both,
A famous scholar; with authority
And eloquence to press your friendship home.
Surely in words such as you have at will
You can persuade them, for all sakes—and yet
No matter mine perhaps—but, as you say,
Their fathers', Antioch's, their own—
*Cipr.* Alas!
I doubt you know not in your maiden calm
How fast all love and logic such as that
Burns stubble up before a flame like this.
*Just.* (*aside*). And none in heav'n to help them!
*Cipr.* All I can
But one condition hardly wringing out
Of peace, till my impartial embassy
Have ask'd on their behalf, which of the twain—

How shall I least offend?—you least disdain.

*Just.* Disdain is not the word, sir; oh, no, no!
I know and honour both as noblemen
Of blood and station far above my own;
And of so suitable accomplishments.
Oh, there are many twice as fair as I,
And of their own conditions, who, with half
My wooing, long ere this had worn the wreath
Tied with a father's blessing, and all Antioch
To follow them with Hymenæal home.

*Cipr.* But if these fiery men, do what one will,
Will look no way but this?—

*Just.* Oh, but they will;
Divert their eyes awhile, a little while,
Their hearts will follow; such a sudden passion
Can but have struck a shallow root—perhaps
Ere this had perish'd, had not rival pride
Between them blown it to this foolish height.

*Cipr.* Disdain is not the word then. Well, to seek,
What still as wide as ever from assent—
Could you but find it in your heart to feel
If but a hair's-breadth less—say disesteem
For one than for another—

*Just.* No, no, no!
Even to save their lives I could not say
What is not—cannot—nay, and if it could
And I could say that was that is not—*can* not—
How should that hair's-breadth less of hope to one
Weigh with the other to desist his suit,
Both furious as you tell me?

*Cipr.* And both are:
But ev'n that single hair thrown in by you
Will turn the scale that else the sword must do.

*Just.* But surely must it not suffice for both
That they who drew the sword in groundless hope
Sheathe it in sure despair? Despair! Good God!
For a poor creature like myself, despair!
That men with souls to which a word like that
Lengthens to infinite significance,
Should pin it on a wretched woman's sleeve!
But as men talk—I mean, so far as I
Can make them, as they say, despair of that
Of which, even for this world's happiness,
Despair is better hope of better things—
Will not my saying—and as solemnly
As what one best may vouch for; that so far
As any hope of my poor liking goes,
Despair indeed they must—why should not this
Allay their wrath, and let relapsing love
In his old channel all the clearer run
For this slight interjection in the current?
Why should it not be so?

*Cipr.* Alas, I know not:
For though as much they promised, yet I doubt
When each, however you reject him now,
Believes you might be won hereafter still,
Were not another to divide the field;
Each upon each charging the exigence
He will not see lies in himself alone,
Might draw the scarcely sheathèd sword at once;
Or stifled hate under a hollow truce
Blaze out anew at some straw's provocation,
And I perhaps not by to put it out.

*Just.* What can, what can be done then?

*Cipr.* Oh Justina,
Pardon this iteration. Think once more,

Before your answer with its consequence
Travels upon my lip to destiny.
I know you more than maiden-wise reserved
To other importunities of love
Than those which ev'n the pure for pure confess;
Yet no cold statue, which, however fair,
Could not inflame so fierce a passion; but
A breathing woman with a beating heart,
Already touch'd with pity, you confess,
For these devoted men you cannot love.
Well, then—I will not hint at such a bower
As honourable wedlock would entwine
About your father's age and your own youth,
Which ev'n for him—and much less for yourself—
You would not purchase with an empty hand.
But yet, with no more of your heart within
Than what you now confess to—pity—pity,
For generous youth wearing itself away
In thankless adoration at your door,
Neglecting noble opportunities;
Turning all love but yours to deadly hate—
Sedate, and wise, and modestly resolved,
Can you be, lady, of yourself so sure—
(And surely they will argue your disdain
As apt to yield as their devotion)—
That, all beside so honourably faced,
You, who now look with pity, and perhaps
With gratitude, upon their blundering zeal,
May not be won to turn an eye less loath
On one of them, and blessing one, save both?

*Just.* Alas! I know it is impossible—
Not if they wasted all their youth in sighs,
And even slavish importunities,

I could but pity—pity all the more
That all the less what only they implore
To yield; so great a gulf between us lies.
*Cipr.* What—is the throne pre-occupied?
*Just.* If so,
By one that Antioch dreams little of.
But it grows late: and if we spoke till dawn,
I have no more to say.
*Cipr.* Nor more will hear?
*Just.* Alas, sir, to what purpose? When, all said,
Said too as you have said it—
And I have but the same hard answer still;
Unless to thank you once and once again,
And charge you with my thankless errand back,
But in such better terms,
As, if it cannot stop ill blood, at least
Shall stop blood-shedding 'tween these hapless men.
*Cipr.* And shall the poor ambassador who fail'd
In the behalf of those who sent him here,
Hereafter dare to tell you how he sped
In making peace between them?
*Just.* Oh, do but that,
And what poor human prayer can win from Heav'n,
You shall not be the poorer. So, good-night! [*Exit.*
*Cipr.* Good-night, good-night! Oh Lelio and Floro!
If ever friends well turn'd to deadly foes,
Wiser to fight than I to interpose. [*Exit.*
*Lucifer* (*passing from behind*). The shaft has hit the mark; and by the care
Of hellish surgery shall fester there. [*Exit.*

## ACT II.

### SCENE I.—*The sea-shore; a storm raging.*

*Cipriano* (*cavalierly drest*). Oh, mad, mad, mad, ambition! to the skies
Lifting to drop me deep as Hades down!—
What! Cipriano—what the once so wise
Cipriano—quit his wonted exercise
Among the sober walks of old renown,
To fly at love—to swell the wind with sighs
Vainer than learning—doff the scholar's gown
For cap and feather, and such airy guise
In which triumphant love is wont to go,
But wins less acceptation in her eyes—
The only eyes in which I cared to show—
My heart beneath the borrow'd feather bleeding—
Than in the sable suit of long ago,
When heart-whole for another's passion pleading.
She loves not Floro—loves not Lelio,
Whose quarrel sets the city's throat agape,
And turns her reputation to reproof
With altercation of some dusky shape
Haunting the twilight underneath her roof—
Which each believes the other:—and, for me,
The guilty one of the distracted three,
She closest veils herself, or waves aloof
In scorn; or in such self-abasement sweet
As sinks me deep and deeper at her feet,
Bids me return—return for very shame

Back to my proper studies and good name,
Nor waste a life on one who, let me pine
To death, will never but in death be mine.
Oh, she says well—Oh, heart of stone and ice
Unworthy of the single sacrifice
Of one true heart's devotion! Oh divine
Creature, whom all the glory and the worth
That ever ravaged or redeem'd the earth
Were scanty worship offer'd at your shrine!
Oh Cipriano, master-fool of all
The fools that unto thee for wisdom call;
Of supercilious Pallas first the mock,
And now blind Cupid's scorn, and laughing-stock;
Who in fantastic arrogance at odds
With the Pantheon of your people's gods
Ransack'd the heavens for one more pure and whole
To fill the empty temple of the soul,
Now caught by retribution in the mesh
Of one poor piece of perishable flesh—
What baser demon of the pit would buy
With all your ruin'd aspirations?

*Lucifer* (*within*). I!—

*Cipr.* What! The very winds and waters
Hear, and answer to the cry
She is deaf to!—Better thrown
On distracted nature's bosom
With some passion like my own
Torn and tortured: where the sun
In the elemental riot
Ere his daily reign half done,
Leaves half-quencht the tempest-drencht
Welkin scowling on the howling
Wilderness of waves that under

Slash of whirlwind, spur of lightning,
Roar of thunder, black'ning, whit'ning,
Fling them foaming on the shore—
Let confusion reign and roar!—
Lightnings, for your target take me!
Waves, upon the sharp rock break me,
Or into your monstrous hollow
Back regurgitating hurl;
Let the mad tornado whirl me
To the furthest airy circle
Dissipated of the sky,
Or the gaping earth down-swallow
To the centre!—

*Lucifer* (*entering*). By-and-bye.

*Cipr.* Hark again! and in her monstrous
Labour, with a human cry
Nature yearning—what portentous
Glomeration of the storm
Darkly cast in human form,
Has she bolted!—

*Luc.* As among
Flashes of the lightning flung
Beside you, in its thunder now
Aptly listen'd—

*Cipr.* What art thou?

*Luc.* One of a realm, though dimly in your charts
Discern'd, so vast that as from out of it
As from a fountain all the nations flow,
Back they shall ebb again; and sway'd by One
Who, without Oriental over-boast,
Because from him all kings their crowns derive,
Is rightfully saluted King of kings,
Whose reign is as his kingdom infinite,

Whose throne is heaven, and earth his footstool, and
Sun, moon, and stars his diadem and crown.
Who at the first disposal of his kingdom
And distribution into sea and land—
Me, who for splendour of my birth and grand
Capacities above my fellows shone,
Star of the Morning, Lucifer, alone—
Me he made captain of the host who stand
Clad as the morning star about his throne.
Enough for all ambition but my own;
Who discontented with the all but all
Of chiefest subject of Omnipotence
Rebell'd against my Maker; insolence
Avenged as soon as done on me and all
Who bolster'd up rebellion, by a fall
Far as from heav'n to Hades. Madness, I know;
But worse than madness whining to repent
Under a rod that never will relent.
Therefore about the land and sea I go
Arm'd with the very instrument of hate
That blasted me: lightnings anticipate
My coming, and the thunder rolls behind;
Thus charter'd to enlarge among mankind,
And to recruit from human discontent
My ranks in spirit, not in number, spent.
Of whom, in spite of this brave gaberdine,
I recognize thee one: thee, by the line
Scarr'd on thy brow, though not so deep as mine;
Thee by the hollow circles of those eyes
Where the volcano smoulders but not dies:
Whose fiery torrent running down has scarr'd
The cheek that time had not so deeply marr'd.
Do not I read thee rightly?

*Cipr.* But too well;
However come to read me—
*Luc.* By the light
Of my own darkness reading yours—how deep!
But not, as mine is, irretrievable:
Who from the fulness of my own perdition
Would, as I may, revenge myself on him
By turning to fruition your despair—
What if I make you master at a blow,
Not only of the easy woman's heart
You now despair of as impregnable,
And waiting but my word to let you in,
But lord of nature's secret, and the lore
That shall not only with the knowledge, but
Possess you with the very power of him
You sought so far and vainly for before:
So far All-eyes, All-wise, Omnipotent—
If not to fashion, able yet to shake
That which the other took such pains to make—
As in the hubbub round us; I who blurr'd
The spotless page of nature at a word
With darkness and confusion, will anon
Clear it, to write another marvel on.—
By the word of power that binds
And loosens; by the word that finds
Nature's heart through all her rinds,
Hearken, waters, fires, and winds;
Having had your roar, once more
Down with you, or get you gone.
*Cipr.* With the clatter and confusion
Of the universe about me
Reeling—all within, without me,—
Dizzy, dazzled—if delusion,

Waking, dreaming, seeing, seeming—
Which I know not—only, lo!
Like some mighty madden'd beast
Bellowing in full career
Of fury, by a sudden blow
Stunn'd, and in a moment stopp'd
All the roar, or into slow
Death-ward-drawing murmur, leaving
Scarce the fallen carcase heaving,
With the fallen carcase dropp'd.—
Behold! the word scarce fallen from his lips,
Swift almost as a human smile may chase
A frown from some conciliated face,
The world to concord from confusion slips:
The winds that blew the battle up dead slain,
Or with their tatter'd standards swept amain
From heav'n; the billows of the erected deep
Roll'd with their crests into the foaming plain;
While the scared earth begins abroad to peep
And smooth her ruffled locks, as from a rent
In the black centre of the firmament,
Revenging his unnatural eclipse,
The Lord of heav'n from its ulterior blue
That widens round him as he pierces through
The folded darkness, from his sovereign height
Slays with a smile the dragon-gloom of night.

*Luc.* All you have heard and witness'd hitherto
But a foretaste to quicken appetite
For that substantial after-feast of power
That I shall set you down to take your fill of:
When not the fleeting elements alone
Of wind, and fire, and water, floating wrack,
But this same solid frame of earth and stone,

Yea, with the mountain loaded on her back,
Reluctantly, shall answer to your spell
From a more adamantine heart stone-cold
Than her's you curse for inaccessible.
What, you would prove it? Let the mountain there
Step out for witness. Listen, and behold.
Monster upshot of upheaving*
Earth, by fire and flood conceiving;
Shapeless ark of refuge, whither,
When came deluge creeping round,
Man retreated—to be drown'd—
Now your granite anchor, fast
In creation's centre, cast,
Come with all your tackle cleaving
Down before the magic blast—
*Cipr.* And the unwieldy vessel, lo!
Rib and deck of rock, and shroud
Of pine, top-gallanted with cloud,
All her forest-canvas squaring,
Down the undulating woodland
As she flounders to and fro
All before her tearing, bearing
Down upon us—
*Luc.* Anchor, ho!—
Behold the ship in port! And what if freighted
With but one jewel, worthy welcome more
Than ever full-fraught Argosy awaited,
At last descried by desperate eyes ashore;
From the first moment of her topsail showing
Like a thin cobweb spun 'twixt sea and sky;

* The Phenomena that follow, and are here supposed to be the magic illusions created in Cipriano's eyes, are in the original represented by theatrical Machinery.

Then momently before a full wind blowing
Into her full proportions, till athwart
The seas that bound beneath her, by and bye
She sweeps full sail into the cheering port—
Strangest bark that ever plied
In despite of wind and tide,
At the captain's magic summons
Down your granite ribs divide,
And show the jewel hid inside.
*Cipr.* Justina!—
*Luc.* Soft! The leap that looks so easy
Yet needs a longer stride than you can master.
*Cipr.* Oh divine apparition, that I fain
Would all my life as in Elysium lose
Only by gazing after; and thus soon
As rolling cloud across the long'd-for moon,
The impitiable rocks enclose again!—
But was it she indeed?
*Luc.* She that shall be,
And yours, by means that, bringing her to you,
Possess you of all nature, which in vain
You sigh'd for ere for nature's masterpiece.
And thus much, as I told you, only sent
As foretaste of that great accomplishment,
Which if you will but try for, you can reach
By means which, if I practise, I can teach.
*Cipr.* And at what cost?
*Luc.* You that have flung so many years away
In learning and in love that came to nothing,
Think not to win the harvest in a day!
The God you search for works, you know, by means
(That your philosophers call second cause),
And we by means must underwork him—

*Cipr.* Well!—
*Luc.* To comprehend, and, after, to constrain
Whose mysteries you will not count as vain
A year in this same mountain lock'd with me?—
*Cipr.* Where she is?—
*Luc.* As I told you, where shall be.
At least this mountain after a short labour
Has brought forth something better than a mouse;
And what then after a whole year's gestation
Accomplish under our joint midwifery,
Under a bond by which you bind you mine
In fewer and no redder drops than needs
The leech of land or water when he bleeds?
Let us about—but first upon his base
The mountain we must study in replace,
That else might puzzle your geography.
Come, take your stand upon the deck with me,
Till with her precious cargo safe inside,
And all her forest-colours flying wide,
The mighty vessel put again to sea—
What, are you ready?—Wondrous smack,
As without a turn or tack
Hither come, so thither back,
And let subside the ruffled deep
Of earth to her primæval sleep.—
How steadily her course the good ship trims,
While Antioch far into the distance swims,
With all her follies bubbling in the wake;
Her scholars that more hum than honey make:
Muses so chaste as never of their kind
Would breed, and Cupid deaf as well as blind:
For Cipriano, wearied with the toil
Of so long working on a thankless soil,

At last embarking upon magic seas
In a more wondrous Argo than of old,
Sets sails with me for such Hesperides
As glow with more than dragon-guarded gold. [*Exeunt.*

## ACT III.

### SCENE I. *Before the mountain.* CIPRIANO.

*Cipriano.* Now that at last in his eternal round
Hyperion, after skirting either pole,
Of his own race has set the flaming goal
In heav'n of my probation under-ground:
Up from the mighty Titan with his feet
Touching the centre, and his forest-hair
Entangling with the stars; whose middle womb
Of two self-buried lives has been the tomb;
At last, my year's apprenticeship complete,
I rise to try my cunning, and as one
Arm'd in the dark who challenges the sun.
You heav'ns, for me your azure brows with cloud
Contract, or to your inmost depth unshroud:
Thou sapphire-floating counterpart below,
Obsequious of my moon-like magic flow:
For me you mountains fall, you valleys rise,
With all your brooks and fountains far withdrawn;
You forests shudder underneath my sighs;
And whatsoever breathes in earth and skies;
You birds that on the bough salute the dawn;
And you wild creatures that through wood and glen
Do fly the hunter, or the hunter flies;
Yea, man himself, most terrible to men;

Troop to my word, about my footstep fawn;
Yea, ev'n you spirits that by viewless springs
Move and perplex the tangled web of things,
Wherever in the darkest crypt you lurk
Of nature, nature to my purpose work;
That not the dead material element,
But complicated with the life beyond
Up to pure spirit, shall my charm resent,
And take the motion of my magic wand;
And, once more shaken on her ancient throne,
In me old nature a new master own.

*Lucifer.* But how is this, Cipriano, that misled
By hasty passion you affront the day
Ere master of the art of darkness?

*Cipr.* Nay,
By that same blazing witness overhead
Standing in heav'n to mark the time foretold,
Since first imprison'd in this mountain-hold
My magic so preluded with the dread
Preliminary kingdom of the dead,
That not alone the womb of general earth
Which Death has crowded thick with second birth,
But monuments with marble lips composed
To dream till doomsday, suddenly disclosed,
And woke their sleepers centuries too soon
To stare upon the old remember'd moon.
Wearied of darkness, I will see the day:
Sick of the dead, the living will assay:
And if the ghastly year I have gone through
Bear half its promised harvest, will requite
With a too warm good-morrow the long night
That one cold living heart consign'd me to.

*Luc.* Justina!

*Cipr.* Ay, Justina: now no more
Obsequiously sighing at the door
That never open'd, nor the heart of stone
On which so long I vainly broke my own;
But of her soul and body, when and how
I will, I claim the forfeit here and now.

*Luc.* Enough: the hour is come; do thou design
The earth with circle, pentagram, and trine;
The wandering airs with incantation twine;
While through her sleep-enchanted sense I shake
The virgin constancy I cannot break.

(*Clouds roll before the mountain, hiding* CIPRIANO.)

Thou nether realm of darkness and despair,
Whose fire-enthronèd emperor am I;
Where many-knotted till the word they lie,
Your subtlest spirits at the word untie,
And breathe them softly to this upper air;
With subtle soft insinuation fair
Of foul result encompass and attaint
The chastity of the rebellious saint
Who dares the Spirit of this world defy.
Spirits that do shapeless float
In darkness as in light the mote,
At my summons straightway take
Likeness of the fairest make,
And, her sleeping sense about
Seal'd from all the world without,
Through the bolted eyelids creep;
Entheatre the walls of sleep
With an Eden where the sheen
Of the leaf and flower between
All is freshest, yet with Eve's
Apple peeping through the leaves;

Through whose magic mazes may
Melancholy fancy stray
Till she lose herself, or into
Softer passion melt away:
While the scent-seducing rose
Gazing at her as she goes
With her turning as she turns,
Into her his passion burns;
While the wind among the boughs
Whispers half-remember'd vows;
Nightingale interpreters
Into their passion translate hers;
And the murmurs of a stream
Down one current draw the dream.
While for hidden chorus, I
At her dreaming ear supply
Such a comment as her own
Heart to nature's shall atone:
Till the secret influence
Of the genial season even
Holy blood that sets to heaven
Draws into the lower sense;
Till array'd in angel guise
Earthly memories surprise
Ev'n the virgin soul, and win
Holy pity's self to sin.

(*The clouds roll away, and discover* JUSTINA *asleep in her chamber.*)

*Lucifer* (*at her ear*). Come forth, come forth, Justina, come; for scared
Winter is vanish'd, and victorious Spring
Has hung her garland on the boughs he bared:

Come forth; there is a time for everything.
*Justina* (*in her sleep*). That was my father's voice—
come, Livia—
My mantle—oh, not want it?—well then, come.
*Luc.* Ay, come abroad, Justina; it is Spring;
The world is not with sunshine and with leaf
Renew'd to be the tomb of ceaseless grief;
Come forth: there is a time for everything.
*Just.* How strange it is—
I think the garden never look'd so gay
As since my father died.
*Luc.* Ev'n so: for now,
Returning with the summer wind, the hours
Dipp'd in the sun re-dress the grave with flowers,
And make new wreaths for the survivor's brow;
Whose spirit not to share were to refuse
The power that all creating, all renews
With self-diffusive warmth, that, with the sun's,
At this due season through creation runs,
Nor in the first creation more express'd
Than by the singing builder of the nest
That waves on this year's leaf, or by the rose
That underneath them in his glory glows;
Life's fountain, flower, and crown; without whose giving
Life itself were not, nor, without, worth living.
*Chorus of Voices.* Life's fountain, flower, and crown;
without whose giving
Life itself were not, nor, without, worth living.

*Song.*

Who that in his hour of glory
Walks the kingdom of the rose,
And misapprehends the story
Which through all the garden blows;

Which the southern air who brings
It touches, and the leafy strings
Lightly to the touch respond;
And nightingale to nightingale
Answering a bough beyond—
*Chorus.* Nightingale to nightingale
Answering a bough beyond.

*Just.* These serenaders—singing their old songs
Under one's window—
*Luc.* Ay, and if nature must decay or cease
Without it; what of nature's masterpiece?
Not in her outward lustre only, but
Ev'n in the soul within the jewel shut;
What but a fruitless blossom; or a lute
Without the hand to touch it music-mute:
Incense that will not rise to heav'n unfired;
By that same vernal spirit uninspired
That sends the blood up from the heart, and speaks
In the rekindled lustre of the cheeks?
*Chorus.* Life's fountain, flower, and crown; without whose giving
Life itself were not, nor, without, worth living.

*Song.*

Lo the golden Girasolé,
That to him by whom she burns,
Over heaven slowly, slowly,
As he travels ever turns;
And beneath the wat'ry main
When he sinks, would follow fain,
Follow fain from west to east,
And then from east to west again.
*Chorus.* Follow would from west to east,
And then from east to west again.

*Just.* He beckon'd us, and then again was gone;
Oh look! under the tree there, Livia—
Where he sits—reading—scholar-like indeed!—
With the dark hair that was so white upon
His shoulder—but how deadly pale his face!—
And, statue-still-like, the quaint evergreen
Up and about him creeps, as one has seen
Round some old marble in a lonely place.

*Luc.* Ay, look on that—for, as the story runs,
Ages ago, when all the world was young,
That ivy was a nymph of Latium,
Whose name was Hedera: so passing fair
That all who saw fell doting on her; but
Herself so icy-cruel, that her heart
Froze dead all those her eyes had set on fire.
Whom the just God who walk'd that early world,
By right-revenging metamorphosis
Changed to a thing so abject-amorous,
She grovels on the ground to catch at any
Wither'd old trunk or sapling, in her way:
So little loved as loathed, for strangling those
Round whom her deadly-deathless arms enclose.

*Song.*

So for her who having lighted
  In another heart the fire,
Then shall leave it unrequited
  In its ashes to expire:
After her that sacrifice
Through the garden burns and cries;
In the sultry breathing air:
In the flowers that turn and stare—
"What has she to do among us,
Falsely wise and frozen fair?"

*Luc.* Listen, Justina, listen and beware.
*Just.* Again! That voice too?—But you know my father
Is ill—is in his chamber—
How sultry 'tis—the street is full and close—
Let us get home—why do they stare at us?
And murmur something—"Cipriano?—Where
"Is Cipriano?—lost to us—some say,
"And to himself,—self-slain—mad— Where is he?"
Alas, alas, I know not—
*Luc.* Come and see—
*Justina* (*waking*). Mercy upon me! Who is this?
*Luc.* Justina, your good angel,
Who, moved by your relenting to the sighs
Of one who lost himself for your disdain,
Will lead you to the cavern where he lies
Subsisting on the memory of your eyes—
*Just.* 'Twas all a dream!—
*Luc.* That dreaming you fulfil.
*Just.* Oh, no, with all my waking soul renounce.
*Luc.* But, dreaming or awake, the soul is one,
And the deed purposed in Heaven's eyes is done.
*Just.* Oh Christ! I cannot argue—I can pray,
Christ Jesus, oh, my Saviour, Jesu Christ!
Let not hell snatch away from Thee the soul
Thou gav'st Thy life to save!—Livia!—Livia!

*Enter* LIVIA.

Where is my father? where am I? Oh, I know—
In my own chamber—and my father—oh!—
But, Livia, who was it that but now
Was here—here in my very chamber—
*Livia.* Madam?

*Just.* You let none in? oh, no! I know it—but
Some one there was—here—now—as I cried out—
A dark, strange figure—
*Livia.* My child, compose yourself;
No one has come, or gone, since you were laid
In your noon-slumber. This was but a dream.
The air is heavy; and the melancholy
You live alone with since your father's death—
*Just.* A dream, a dream indeed—oh Livia,
That leaves his pressure yet upon my arm—
And that without the immediate help of God
I had not overcome—Oh, but the soul,
The soul must be unsteady in the faith,
So to be shaken even by a dream.
Oh, were my father here! But he's at rest—
I know he is—upon his Saviour's breast;
And—who knows!—may have carried up my cries
Ev'n to His ear upon whose breast he lies!
Give me my mantle, Livia; I'll to the church;
Where if but two or three are met in prayer
Together, He has promised to be there—
And I shall find him.
*Livia.* Oh, take care, take care!
You know the danger—in broad daylight too—
Or take me with you.
*Just.* And endanger two?
Best serve us both by keeping close at home,
Praying for me as I will pray for you. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Entrance to the mountain cavern.* CIPRIANO, *in a magician's dress, with wand, &c.*

What! do the powers of earth, and air, and hell,
Against their upstart emperor rebel?

Lo, in obedience to the rubric dark
The dusky cheek of earth with mystic mark
Of pentagram and circle I have lined,
And hung my fetters on the viewless wind,
And yet the star of stars, for whose ascent
I ransack all the lower firmament,
In unapparent darkness lags behind:
Whom once again with adjuration new
Of all the spirits whom these signs subdue,
Whether by land or water, night or day,
Whether awake or sleeping, yea or nay,
I summon now before me.—

*Enter slowly a veiled Figure of* JUSTINA.

*The Figure.* What dark spell
From the sequester'd sadness of my cell,
Through the still garden, through the giddy street,
And up the solitary mountain-side,
Leads me with sleep-involuntary feet?—

*Cipr.* 'Tis she, as yet though clouded!—oh divine Justina!—

*The Figure.* Cipriano!—

*Cipr.* At last here,
In such a chamber where ev'n Phœbus fails
To pierce, and baffled breezes tell no tales,
At last, to crown the labour of a year
Of solitary toil and darkness—here!—
And at a price beside—but none too dear—
Oh year-long night well borne for such a day!
Oh soul, for one such sense well sold away!
Oh Now that makes for all the past amends,
Oh moment that eternal life transcends
To such a point of ecstasy, that just

About to reap the wishes that requite
All woes—

*The Figure* (*unveiling a skull and vanishing as it speaks*).

Behold, the World and its delight
Is dust and ashes, dust and ashes, dust—

*Cipr.* (*flinging down his Wand*). Lucifer! Lucifer!
Lucifer!—

*Luc.* My son!

*Cipr.* Quick! With a word—

*Luc.* How now?—

*Cipr.* With a word—at once—
With all your might—

*Luc.* Well, what with it?—

*Cipr.* The charm—
Shatter it! shatter it, I say!—Is't done?
Is't vanish'd—

*Luc.* What has thus unsensed you?

*Cipr.* Oh!—
You know it—saw it—did it—

*Luc.* Come—be a man:
What, scared with a mere death's-head?

*Cipr.* Death's, indeed!—

*Luc.* What was it more?—

*Cipr.* Justina's seeming self—
After what solitary labour wrought,
And after what re-iterated charms,
Step by step here in all her beauty brought
Within the very circle of these arms,
Then to death's grisly lineaments resign'd
Slipp'd through them, and went wailing down the wind
"Ashes and dust and ashes"—
Nay, nay, pretend not that the fault was mine—

The written incantation line by line
I mutter'd, and the mystic figure drew;
You only are to blame—you only, you,
Cajoling me, or by your own cajoled,
Bringing me fleshless death for the warm life
For which my own eternal life is sold.

*Luc.* You were too rash,—I warn'd you, and if not,
Who thinks at a first trial to succeed?
Another time—

*Cipr.* No, no! No more of it!
What, have I so long dabbled with the dead,
That all I touch turns to corruption?
Was it indeed herself—her living self—
Till underneath my deadly contact slain;
Or having died during the terrible year
I have been living worse than dead with you,
What I beheld not she, but what she was,
Out of the tomb that only owns my spell
Drawn into momentary lifeliness
To mock me with the phantom of a beauty
Whose lineaments the mere impalpable air
Let in upon disfeatures—Was it she?

*Luc.* She lives, and shall be yours.

*Cipr.* Not if herself,
In more than all her living beauty breathing,
Came to efface that deadly counterfeit.—
Oh, what have I been doing all this while,
From which I wake as from a guilty dream,
But with my guilt's accomplice at my side
To prove its terrible reality?
Where were my ears, my eyes, my senses? where
The mother-wit which serves the common boor,
Not to resent that black academy,

Mess-mating with dead men and living fiends,
And not to know no good could come of it?
My better self—the good that in me grew
By nature, and by good instruction till'd,
Under your shadow turn'd to poisonous weed:
And ev'n the darker art you bribed me with,
To master, if by questionable ways,
The power I sigh'd for in my better days,
So little reaching to the promised height,
As sinking me beneath the lowest fiend,
Who, for the inestimable self I sold,
Pays the false self you made me with false gold!

*Luc.* When will blind fury, falling foul of all,
Light where it should? Suppose a fault so far,
As knowledge working through unpractised hands
Might fail at first encounter; all men know
How a mere sand will check a vast machine;
And in these complicated processes
An agency so insignificant
As to be wholly overlook'd it was
At the last moment foil'd us.

*Cipr.* But she lives!
Lives—from your clutches saved, and saved from mine—
Ev'n from that only shadow of my guilt
That could have touch'd her, saved—unguilty shame,
That now is left with all the guilt to me.
Oh that I knew a God in all the heav'ns
To thank, or ev'n of Tartarus—ev'n thee,
Thee would I bless, whatever power it be
That with that shadow saved her, and mock'd me
Back to my better senses. If not she,
What was it?

*Luc.* What you saw.

*Cipr.* A phantom?
*Luc.* Well,
A phantom.
*Cipr.* But how raised?
*Luc.* What if by her?
She is a sorcerer as her father was.
*Cipr.* A sorcerer! She a sorcerer! oh, black lie
To whiten your defeat! and, were it true,
Oh mighty doctor to be foil'd at last
By a mere woman!—If a sorcerer,
Then of a sort you deal not with, nor hell—
And ev'n Olympus likes the sport too well—
Raising a phantom not to draw me down
To deeper sin, but with its ghastly face
And hollow voice both telling of the tomb
They came from, warning me of what complexion
Were all the guilty wishes of this world.
But let the phantom go where gone it is—
Not of what mock'd me, but what saved herself,
By whatsoever means—ay, what was it,
That pitiful agency you told me of
So insignificant, as overlook'd
At the last moment thwarted us?
*Luc.* What matter?
When now provided for, and which when told
You know not—
*Cipr.* Which I will be told to know—
For as one ris'n from darkness tow'rd the light,
A veil seems clearing from before my sight—
She is a sorcerer, and of the kind
That old Lisandro died suspected of?—
Oh cunning doctor, to outwit yourself,
Outwitted as you have been, and shall be

By him who if your devilish magic fail'd
To teach its purposed mischief,
Thus on his teacher turns it back in full
To force him to confess the counter-power
That foil'd us both.

(*He catches up his wand.*)

*Luc.* Poor creature that you are!
Did not the master from his scholars hold
One sleight of hand that masters all the rest,
What magic needed to compel the devil
To convict those who find him out too late?
Yet to increase your wrath by leaving it
Blind in the pit your guilt consigns you to,
I shall not answer—

*Cipr.* Then if your own hell
Cannot enforce you; by that Unknown Power
That saved Justina from your fangs, although
Yourself you cannot master, if you know,
I charge you name him to me!—

*Luc.* (*after a great flash of lightning, and thunder*).
Jesus Christ!

*Cipr.* (*after a pause*). Ev'n so!—Christ Jesus—Jesus Christ—the same
That poor Lisandro died suspected of,
And I had heard and read of with the rest
But to despise, in spite of all the blood
By which the chosen few their faith confess'd—
The prophet-carpenter of Nazareth,
Poor, persecuted, buffeted, reviled,
Spit upon, crown'd with thorns, and crucified
With thieves—the Son of God—the Son of man,
Whose shape He took to teach them how to live,

And doff'd upon the cross to do away
The sin and death you and your devil-deities
Had heap'd on him from the beginning?

*Luc.* Yea!—

*Cipr.* Of the one sun of Deity one ray
That was before the world was, and that made
The world and all that is within it?

*Luc.* Yea!

*Cipr.* Eternal and Almighty then: and yet
Infinite Centre as he is of all
The all but infinite universe he made,
With eyes to see me plotting, and with ear
To hear one solitary creature pray,
From one dark corner of his kingdom?

*Luc.* Yea!

*Cipr.* All one, all when, all where, all good, all mighty,
All eye, all ear, all self-integrity—
Methinks this must be He of whom I read
In Greek and Roman sages dimly guess'd,
But never until now fully confess'd
In this poor carpenter of Nazareth,
With poor Justina for his confessor—
And now by thee—by thee—once and again
Spite of thyself—for answer me you must,
Convicted at the bar of your own thunder—
Is this the God for whom I sought so long
In mine own soul and those of other men,
Who from the world's beginning till to-day
Groped or were lost in utter darkness?

*Luc.* Yea!

*Cipr.* Enough; and your confession shall be mine—

*Luc.* And to like purpose; to believe, confess,
And tremble, in the everlasting fire

Prepared for all who Him against their will
Confess, and in their deeds deny him—
*Cipr.* Oh,
Like a flogg'd felon after full confession
Released at last!
*Luc.* To bind you mine for ever.
*Cipr.* Thine! What art thou?
*Luc.* The god whom you must worship.
*Cipr.* There is no God but one, whom you and I
Alike acknowledge, as in Jesus Christ
Reveal'd to man. What other god art thou?
*Luc.* Antichrist! He that all confessing Christ
Confess; Satan, the Serpent, the first Tempter,
Who tempted the first Father of mankind
With the same offer to a like result
That I have tempted thee with; yea, had power
Even Him in his humanity to tempt,
Though Him in vain; the god of this world; if
False god, true devil; true angel as I was,
Son of the morning, Lucifer, who fell
(As first I told thee, had'st thou ears to hear)
For my rebellion down from heaven to hell
More terrible than any Tartarus,
Where over those who fell with me I reign.
Whom, though with them bound in the self-same chain
Of everlasting torment, God allows
To reach my hands out of my prison-house
On all who like me from their God rebel,
As thou hast done.
*Cipr.* Not when for God I knew him.
*Luc.* Ay, but who but for pride and lust like mine
Had known Him sooner—
*Cipr.* And had sooner known

But for thy lying gods that shut Him out.
*Luc.* Which others much less wise saw through before.
*Cipr.* All happy they then! But all guilty I,
Yet thus far guiltless of denying Him
Whom even thou confessest.
*Luc.* But too late—
Already mine, if not so sworn before,
Yet by this bond—
*Cipr.* For service unperform'd!
But unperform'd, or done, and payment due,
fling myself and all my debt on Him
Who died to undertake them—
*Luc.* He is the Saviour of the innocent,
Not of the guilty.
*Cipr.* Who alone need saving!
*Luc.* Damnation is the sinner's just award,
And He is just.
*Cipr.* And being just, will not
For wilful blindness tax the want of light:
And All-good as Almighty, and therefore
As merciful as just, will not renounce
Ev'n the worst sinner who confesses Him,
And testifies confession with his blood.
Which, not to waste a moment's argument,
Too like the old logic that I lost my life in,
And hangs for ever dead upon the cross;
I will forthwith shout my confession,
Into the general ear of Antioch,
And from the evidence of thine own mouth,
Not thee alone, but all thy lying gods,
Convict; and you convicting before God,
Myself by man's tribunal judged and damn'd,
Trust by my own blood mixing with the tide

That flow'd for me from the Redeemer's side,
From those few damning drops to wash me free
That bound me thine for ever—
*Lucifer* (*seizing him*). Take my answer—
*Cipriano* (*escaping*). Oh, Saviour of Justina, save Thou me! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *The Hall of Justice in Antioch;* AURELIO, FABIO, SENATORS, *&c., just risen from Council.*

*Aurelio.* You have done well indeed; the very Church
These Christians flock'd to for safe blasphemy
Become the very net to catch them in.
How many, think you?
*Fabio.* Not so many, sir,
As some that are of the most dangerous.
*Aur.* Among the rest this girl, Lisandro's daughter,
As you and I know, Fabio, to our cost:
But now convicted and condemn'd is safe
From troubling us or Antioch any more.
Come, such good service asks substantial thanks;
What shall it be?
*Fabio.* No other, if you please,
Than my son Floro's liberation,
Whom not without good reason for so long
You keep under the city's lock and key.
*Aur.* As my own Lelio, and for a like cause;
Who both distracted by her witchery
Turn'd from fast friends to deadly enemies,
And, in each other's lives, so aimed at ours.
But no more chance of further quarrel now
For one whom Death anticipates for bride
Ere they again gird weapon at their side,

Set them both free forthwith.— [*Exit* FABIO.
This cursèd woman whose fair face and foul
Behaviour was the city's talk and trouble,
Now proved a sorceress, is well condemn'd;
Not only for my sake and Fabio's,
But for all Antioch, whose better youth
She might, like ours, have carried after her
Through lust and duel into blasphemy.

*Re-enter* FABIO *with* LELIO *and* FLORO.

*Lelio.* Once more, sir, at your feet—
*Aur.* Up, both of you.
Floro and Lelio, you understand
What I have done was of no testy humour,
But for three several sakes—
Your own, your fathers', and the city's peace.
Henceforward, by this seasonable use
Of public law for private purpose check'd,
Your fiery blood to better service turn.
Take hands, be friends; the cause of quarrel gone—
*Lelio.* The cause of quarrel gone!—
*Aur.* Be satisfied;
You will know better by and bye; meanwhile
Taking upon my word that so it is;
Which were it not indeed, you were not here
To doubt.
*Floro* (*aside*). Oh flimsy respite of revenge!—
*Aur.* And now the business of the day well crown'd
With this so happy reconciliation,
You and I, Fabio, to our homes again,
Our homes once more, replenish'd with the peace
We both have miss'd so long.—What noise is that?
(*Cries without*). Stop him! A madman! Stop him!—

*Aur.* What is it, Fabio?

*Fabio.* One like mad indeed,
In a strange garb, with flaring eyes, and hair
That streams behind him as he flies along,
Dragging a cloud of rabble after him.

*Aur.* This is no place for either—shut the doors,
And post the soldiers to keep peace without—
(*Cries without*). Stop him!

*Floro and Lelio.* 'Tis Cipriano!—

*Aur.* Cipriano!—

*Enter* CIPRIANO.

*Cipriano.* Ay, Cipriano, Cipriano's self,
Heretofore mad as you that call him so,
Now first himself.—Noble Aurelio,
Who sway'st the sword of Rome in Antioch
And you, companions of my youthful love
And letters; you grave senate ranged above;
And you whose murmuring multitude below
Do make the marble hall of justice rock
From base to capital—hearken unto me:
Yes, I am Cipriano: I am he
So long and strangely lost, now strangely found—
The famous doctor of your schools, renown'd
Not Antioch only but the world about
For learning's prophet-paragon forsooth;
Who long pretending to provide the truth
For other men in fields where never true
Wheat, but a crop of mimic darnel grew,
Reap'd nothing for himself but doubt, doubt, doubt.
Then 'twas that looking with despair and ruth
Over the blasted harvest of my youth,
I saw Justina: saw, and put aside

The barren Pallas for a mortal bride
Divinelier fair than she is feign'd to be:
But in whose deep-entempled chastity,
That look'd down holy cold upon my fire,
Lived eyes that but re-doubled vain desire.
Till this new passion, that more fiercely prey'd
Upon the wither'd spirit of dismay'd
Ambition, swiftly by denial blew
To fury that, transcending all control,
I made away the ruin of my soul
To one whom no chance tempest at my feet
In the mid tempest of temptation threw.
Who blinding me with the double deceit
Of loftier aspiration and more low
Than mortal or immortal man should owe
Fulfill'd for me, myself for his I bound;
With him and death and darkness closeted
In yonder mountain, while about its head
The sun his garland of the seasons wound,
In the dark school of magic I so read,
And wrought to such a questionable power
The black forbidden art I travail'd in,
That though the solid mountain from his base
With all his forest I might counterplace,
I could not one sweet solitary flower
Of beauty to my magic passion win,
Because her God was with her in that hour
To guard her virtue more than mountain-fast:
That only God, whom all my learning past
Fail'd to divine, but from the very foe
That would have kept Him from me come to know
I come to you, to witness and make known:
One God, eternal, absolute, alone;

Of whom Christ Jesus—Jesus Christ, I say—
And, Antioch, open all your ears to-day—
Of that one Godhead one authentic ray,
Vizor'd awhile his Godhead in man's make,
Man's sin and death upon Himself to take;
For man made man; by man unmade and slain
Upon the cross that for mankind He bore—
Dead—buried—and in three days ris'n again
To His hereditary glory, bearing
All who with Him on earth His sorrow sharing
With Him shall dwell in glory evermore.
And all the gods I worship'd heretofore,
And all that you now worship and adore,
From thundering Zeus to cloven-footed Pan,
But lies and idols, by the hand of man
Of brass and stone—fit emblems as they be,
With ears that hear not; eyes that cannot see;
And multitude where only One can be—
From man's own lewd imagination built;
By that same devil held to that old guilt
Who tempted me to new. To whom indeed
If with my sin and blood myself I fee'd
For ever his—that bond of sin and blood
I trust to cancel in the double flood
Of baptism past, and the quick martyrdom
To which with this confession I am come.
Oh delegate of Cæsar to devour
The little flock of Jesus Christ! Behold
One lost sheep just admitted to the fold
Through the pure stream that rolling down the same
Mountain in which I sinn'd, and as I came
By holy hands administer'd, to-day
Shall wash the mountain of my sin away.

Lo, here I stand for judgment; by the blow
Of sudden execution, or such slow
Death as the devil shall, to maintain his lies,
By keeping life alive in death, devise.
Hack, rack, dismember, burn—or crucify,
Like Him who died to find me; Him that I
Will die to find; for whom, with whom, to die
Is life; and life without, and all his lust,
But dust and ashes, dust and ashes, dust—
(*He falls senseless to the ground.*)

*Aurelio* (*after a long pause*). So public and audacious blasphemy
Demands as instant vengeance. Wretched man,
Arise and hear your sentence—

*Lelio.* Oh, sir, sir!
You speak to ice and marble—Cipriano!
Oh look'd for long, and best for ever lost!
But he is mad—he knows not what he says—
You would not, surely, on a madman visit
What only sane confession makes a crime?

*Aur.* I never know how far such blasphemy,
Which seems to spread like wild-fire in the world,
Be fault or folly: only this I know,
I dare not disobey the stern decree
That Cæsar makes my office answer for.
Especially when one is led away
Of such persuasion and authority,
Still drawing after him the better blood
Of Antioch, to better or to worse.

*Lelio.* Cipriano! Cipriano! Yet, pray the gods
He be past hearing me!

*Fabio* (*to Aurelio*). Sir, in your ear—
Justina's hour is come; and through the room

Where she was doom'd, she passes to her doom.
*Aur.* Let us be gone; they must not look on her,
Nor know she is to die until "to die"
Be past predicament. Here let her wait,
Till he she drew along with her to sin
Revive to share with her its punishment.
Come, Lelio—come, Floro—be assured
I loved and honour'd this man as yourselves
Have honour'd him—but now—
*Lelio.* Nay, sir, but—
*Aur.* Nay,
Not I, but Cæsar, Lelio. Come away.
[*Exeunt. Then* JUSTINA *is brought in by soldiers, and left alone.*]
*Just.* All gone—all silence—and the sudden stroke,
Whose only mercy I besought, delay'd
To make my pang the fiercer.—What is here?—
Dead?—By the doom perhaps I am to die,
And laid across the threshold of the road
To trip me up with terror—Yet not so,
If but the life, once lighted here, has flown
Up to the living Centre that my own
Now trembles to!—God help him, breathing still?—
—Cipriano!—
*Cipr.* Ay, I am ready—I can rise—
Is my time come?—Oh, God!
Have I repented and confess'd too late,
And this terrible witness of my crime
Stands at the door of death from which it came
To draw me deeper—
*Just.* Cipriano!
*Cipr.* Yet
Not yet disfeatured—nor the voice—

Oh, if not *That*—this time unsummon'd—come
To take me with you where I raised you from—
Once more—once more—assure me!—
*Justina* (*taking his hand*). Cipriano!—
*Cipr.* And this, too, surely, is a living hand:
Though cold, oh, cold indeed—but yet, but yet,
Not dust and ashes, dust and ashes—
*Just.* No—
But soon to be—
*Cipr.* But soon—but soon to be—
But not as then?—
*Just.* I understand you not—
*Cipr.* I scarce myself—I must have been asleep—
But now not dreaming?
*Just.* No, not dreaming.
*Cipr.* No—
This is the judgment-hall of Antioch,
In which—I scarcely mind how long ago—
Is sentence pass'd on me?—
*Just.* This is indeed
The judgment-hall of Antioch; but why
You here, and what the judgment you await,
I know not—
*Cipr.* No.—But stranger yet to me
Why you yourself, Justina,—Oh my God!
What, all your life long giving God his due,
Is treason unto Cæsar?—
*Just.* Ay, Cipriano—
Against his edict having crept inside
God's fold with that good Shepherd for my guide,
My Saviour Jesus Christ!
*Cipr.* My Saviour too,
And Shepherd—oh, the only good and true

Shepherd and Saviour—
*Just.* You confess Him! *You*
Confess Him, Cipriano!
*Cipr.* With my blood:
Which being all to that confession pledged,
Now waits but to be paid.
*Just.* Oh, we shall die,
And go to heav'n together!
*Cipr.* Amen! Amen!—
And yet—
*Just.* You do not fear—and yet no shame—
What I have faced so long, that present dread
Is almost lost in long anticipation—
*Cipr.* I fear not for this mortal. Would to God
This guilty blood by which in part I trust
To pay the forfeit of my soul with Heav'n
Would from man's hand redeem the innocence
That such atonement needs not.
*Just.* Oh, to all
One faith and one atonement—
*Cipr.* But if both,
If both indeed must perish by the doom
That one deserves and cries for—Oh, Justina,
Who upward ever with the certain step
Of faith hast follow'd unrepress'd by sin;
Now that thy foot is almost on the floor
Of heav'n, pray Him who opens thee the door,
Let with thee one repenting sinner in!
*Just.* What more am I? And were I close to Him
As he upon whose breast he lean'd on here,
No intercessor but Himself between
Himself and the worst sinner of us all—
If but repenting we believe in Him.

*Cipr.* I do believe—I do repent—my faith
Have sign'd in water, and will seal in blood—
*Just.* I have no other hope, but, in that, all.
*Cipr.* Oh hope that almost is accomplishment,
Believing all with nothing to repent!
*Just.* Oh, none so good as not to need—so bad
As not to find, His mercy. If you doubt
Because of your long dwelling in the darkness
To which the light was folly—oh 'twas shown
To the poor shepherd long before the wise;
And if to me, as simple—oh, not mine,
Not mine, oh God! the glory—nor ev'n theirs
From whom I drew it, and—Oh, Cipriano,
Methinks I see them bending from the skies
To take me up to them!
*Cipr.* Whither could I
But into heaven's remotest corner creep,
Where I might only but discern thee, lost
With those you love in glory—
*Just.* Hush! hush! hush!
These are wild words—if I so speak to one
So wise, while I am nothing—
But as you know—Oh, do not think of me,
But Him, into whose kingdom all who come
Are as His angels—
*Cipr.* Ay, but to come there!—
Where if all intercession, even thine,
Be vain—you say so—yet before we pass
The gate of death together, as we shall,—
If then to part—for ever, and for ever—
Unless with your forgiveness—
*Just.* I forgive!
Still I, and I, again! Oh, Cipriano,

Pardon and intercession both alike
With Him alone; and had I to forgive—
Did not He pray upon the cross for those
Who slew Him—as I hope to do on mine
For mine—He bids us bless our enemies
And persecutors; which I think, I think,
You were not, Cipriano—why do you shudder?—
Save in pursuit of that—if vain to me,
Now you know all—

*Cipr.* I now know all—but you
Not that, which asking your forgiveness for,
I dare not name to you, for fear the hand
I hold as anchor-fast to, break away,
And I drive back to hell upon a blast
That roar'd behind me to these very doors,
But stopt—ev'n in the very presence stopt,
That most condemns me his.

*Just.* Alas, alas,
Again all wild to me. The time draws short—
Look not to me, but Him tow'rd whom alone
Sin is, and pardon comes from—

*Cipr.* Oh, Justina,
You know not how enormous is my sin—

*Just.* I know, not as His mercy infinite.

*Cipr.* To Him—to thee—to Him through thee—

*Just.* 'Tis written,
Not all the sand of ocean, nor the star
Of heav'n so many as His mercies are.

*Cipr.* What! ev'n for one who, mad with pouring vows
Into an unrelenting human ear,
Gave himself up to Antichrist—the Fiend—
Though then for such I knew him not—to gain
By darkness all that love had sought in vain!

—Speak to me—if but that hereafter I
Shall never, never, hear your voice again—
Speak to me—

*Just.* (*after a long pause*).—By the Saviour on His cross
A sinner hung who but at that last hour
Cried out to be with Him; and was with Him
In Paradise ere night.

*Cipr.* But was his sin
As mine enormous?—

*Just.* Shall your hope be less,
Offering yourself for Christ's sake on that cross
Which the other only suffer'd for his sin?
Oh, when we come to perish, side by side,
Look but for Him between us crucified,
And call to Him for mercy; and, although
Scarlet, your sin shall be as white as snow!

*Cipr.* Ev'n as you speak, yourself, though yet yourself,
In that full glory that you saw reveal'd
With those you love transfigured, and your voice
As from immeasurable altitude
Descending, tell me that, my shame and sin
Quench'd in the death that opens wide to you
The gate, ev'n this great sinner shall pass through,
With Him, with them, with thee!—

*Just.* Glory to God!—
Oh blest assurance on the very verge
That death is swallow'd up in victory!
And hark! the step of death is at the door—
Courage!—Almighty God through Jesus Christ
Pardon your sins and mine, and as a staff
Guide and support us through the terrible pass
That leads us to His rest!—

*Cipr.* My own beloved!

Whose hand—Oh let it be no sin to say it!—
Is as the staff that God has put in mine—
To lead me through the shadow—yet ev'n now—
Ev'n now—at this last terrible moment—
Which, to secure my being with thee, thee
Forbids to stand between my Judge and me,
And in a few more moments, soul and soul
May read each other as an open scroll—
Yet, wilt thou yet believe me not so vile
To thee, to Him who made thee what thou art,
Till desperation of the only heart
I ever sigh'd for, by I knew not then
How just alienation, drove me down
To that accursèd thing?

*Just.* My Cipriano!
Dost thou remember, in the lighter hour—
Then when my heart, although you saw it not,
All the while yearn'd to thee across the gulf
That yet it dared not pass—my telling thee
That only Death, which others disunites,
Should ever make us one? Behold! and now
The hour is come, and I redeem my vow.

---

(*Here the play may finish: but for any one who would follow Calderon to the end,—Enter* FABIO *with Guard, who lead away* CIPRIANO *and* JUSTINA. *Manent* EUSEBIO, JULIAN, *and Citizens.*)

*Citizen* 1. Alas! alas! alas! So young a pair!
And one so very wise!

*Cit.* 2. And one so fair!

*Cit.* 3. And both as calmly walking to their death
As others to a marriage festival.

*Julian.* Looking as calm, at least, Eusebio,
As when, do you remember, at the last
Great festival of Zeus, we left him sitting
Upon the hill-side with his books?
*Eusebio.* I think
Almost the last we saw of him: so soon,
Flinging his studies and his scholars by,
He went away into that solitude
Which ended in this madness, and now death
With her he lost his wits for.
*Cit.* 1. And has found
In death whom living he pursued in vain.
*Cit.* 2. And after death, as they believe; and so
Thus cheerfully to meet it, if the scaffold
Divorce them to eternal union.
*Cit.* 3. Strange that so wise a man
Should fall into so fond a superstition
Which none but ignorance has taken up.
*Cit.* 1. Oh, love, you know, like time works wonders.
*Eusebio.* Well—
Antioch will never see so great a scholar.
*Julian.* Nor we so courteous a Professor—
I would not see my dear old master die
Were all the wits he lost my legacy.

*Citizens talking.*

One says that, as they went out hand in hand,
He saw a halo like about the moon
About their head, and moving as they went.
— *I* saw it—
— Fancy! fancy!—
— Any how,
They leave it very dark behind them—Thunder!

*Citizens talking.*

— They talk of madness and of blasphemy;
Neither of these, I think, looking much guilty.
— And he, at any rate, I still maintain,
Least like to be deluded by the folly
For which the new religion is condemn'd.
— Before his madness, certainly: but love
First crazed him, as I told you.
— Well, if mad,
How guilty?
— Hush! hush! These are dangerous words.
— Be not you bitten by this madness, neighbour.
Rome's arm is long.
— Ay, and some say her ears.
— Then, ev'n if bitten, bark not—Thunder again!
— And what unnatural darkness!
— Well—a storm—
— They say, you know, he was a sorcerer—
Indeed we saw the mystic dress he wore
All wrought with figures of astrology;
Nay, he confess'd himself as much; and now
May raise a storm to save—
— There was a crash!
— A bolt has fallen somewhere—the walls shake—
— And the ground under—
— Save us, Zeus—
*Voices.* Away!—
The roof is falling in upon us—

(*The wall at the back falls in, and discovers a scaffold with* CIPRIANO *and* JUSTINA *dead, and* LUCIFER *above them.*)

*Lucifer.* Stay!—
And hearken to what I am doom'd to tell.

I am the mighty minister of hell
You mis-call heav'n, and of the hellish crew
Of those false gods you worship for the True;
Who, to revenge *her* treason to the blind
Idolatry that has hoodwinkt mankind,
And *his*, whose halting wisdom after-knew
What her diviner virtue fore-divined,
By devilish plot and artifices thought
Each of them by the other to have caught;
But, thwarted by superior will, those eyes
That, by my fuel fed, had been a flame
To light them both to darkness down, became
As stars to lead together to the skies,
By such a doom as expiates his sin,
And her pure innocence lets sooner in
To that eternal bliss where, side by side,
They reign at His right hand for whom they died.
While I, convicted in my own despite
Thus to bear witness to the eternal light
Of which I lost, and they have won the crown
Plunge to my own eternal darkness down.

HÚNDESE.

# SUCH STUFF AS DREAMS ARE MADE OF.

## A DRAMA,

TAKEN FROM

## CALDERON'S "LA VIDA ES SUEÑO."

---

For Calderon's Drama sufficient would seem
The title he chose for it—"Life is a Dream;"
Two words of the motto now filch'd are enough
For the impudent mixture they label—"Such stuff!"

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

| | |
|---|---|
| BASILIO, | *King of Poland.* |
| SEGISMUND, | *his Son.* |
| ASTOLFO, | *his Nephew.* |
| ESTRELLA, | *his Niece.* |
| CLOTALDO, | *a General in Basilio's Service.* |
| ROSAURA, | *a Muscovite Lady.* |
| FIFE, | *her Attendant.* |

*Chamberlain, Lords in waiting, Officers, Soldiers, &c., in Basilio's Service.*

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*The Scene of the first and third Acts lies on the Polish frontier: of the second Act, in Warsaw.*

# SUCH STUFF AS DREAMS ARE MADE OF.

## ACT I.

SCENE I. *A pass of rocks, over which a storm is rolling away, and the sun setting: in the foreground, half way down, a fortress. Enter first from the topmost rock* ROSAURA, *as from horse-back, in man's attire; and, after her,* FIFE*.

*Rosaura.* There, four-footed Fury, blast-
-engender'd brute, without the wit
Of brute, or mouth to match the bit
Of man—art satisfied at last?
Who, when thunder roll'd aloof,
Tow'rd the spheres of fire your ears
Pricking, and the granite kicking

* As this version of Calderon's drama is not for acting, a higher and wider mountain-scene than practicable may be imagined for Rosaura's descent in the first Act and the soldier's ascent in the last. The bad watch kept by the sentinels who guarded their state-prisoner, together with much else (not all!) that defies sober sense in this wild drama, I must leave Calderon to answer for; whose audience were not critical of detail and probability, so long as a good story, with strong, rapid, and picturesque action and situation, was set before them.

Into lightning with your hoof,
Among the tempest-shatter'd crags
Shattering your luckless rider
Back into the tempest pass'd?
There then lie to starve and die,
Or find another Phaeton
Mad-mettled as yourself; for I,
Wearied, worried, and for-done,
Alone will down the mountain try,
That knits his brows against the sun.
*Fife* (*as to his mule*). There, thou mis-begotten thing,
Long-ear'd lightning, tail'd tornado,
Griffin-hoof-in hurricano,—
(I might swear till I were almost
Hoarse with roaring Asonante)
Who forsooth because your betters
Would begin to kick and fling—
You forthwith your noble mind
Must prove, and kick me off behind,
Tow'rd the very centre whither
Gravity was most inclined.
There where you have made your bed
In it lie; for, wet or dry,
Let what will for me betide you,
Burning, blowing, freezing, hailing;
Famine waste you: devil ride you:
Tempest baste you black and blue:—
(*To Rosaura.*) There! I think in downright railing
I can hold my own with you.
*Ros.* Ah, my good Fife, whose merry loyal pipe,
Come weal, come woe, is never out of tune—
What, you in the same plight too?
*Fife.* Ay;

And madam—sir—hereby desire,
When you your own adventures sing
Another time in lofty rhyme,
You don't forget the trusty squire
Who went with you Don-quixoting.

*Ros.* Well, my good fellow—to leave Pegasus,
Who scarce can serve us than our horses worse—
They say no one should rob another of
The single satisfaction he has left
Of singing his own sorrows; one so great,
So says some great philosopher, that trouble
Were worth encount'ring only for the sake
Of weeping over—what perhaps you know
Some poet calls the "luxury of woe."

*Fife.* Had I the poet or philosopher
In place of her that kick'd me off to ride,
I'd test his theory upon his hide.
But no bones broken, madam—sir, I mean?—

*Ros.* A scratch here that a handkerchief will heal—
And you?—

*Fife.* A scratch in *quiddity*, or kind:
But not in "*quo*"—my wounds are all behind.
But, as you say, to stop this strain,
Which, somehow, once one's in the vein,
Comes clattering after—there again!—
What are we twain—deuce take't!—we two,
I mean, to do—drench'd through and through—
Oh, I shall choke of rhymes, which I believe
Are all that we shall have to live on here.

*Ros.* What, is our victual gone too?—

*Fife.* Ay, that brute
Has carried all we had away with her,
Clothing, and cate, and all.

*Ros.* And now the sun,
Our only friend and guide, about to sink
Under the stage of earth.
*Fife.* And enter Night,
With Capa y Espada—and—pray heav'n!—
With but her lanthorn also.
*Ros.* Ah, I doubt
To-night, if any, with a dark one—or
Almost burnt out after a month's consumption.
Well! well or ill, on horseback or afoot,
This is the gate that lets me into Poland;
And, sorry welcome as she gives a guest
Who writes his own arrival on her rocks
In his own blood—
Yet better on her stony threshold die,
Than live on unrevenged in Muscovy.
*Fife.* Oh what a soul some women have—I mean,
Some men—
*Ros.* Oh, Fife, Fife, as you love me, Fife,
Make yourself perfect in that little part,
Or all will go to ruin!
*Fife.* Oh, I will,
Please God we find some one to try it on.
But, truly, would not any one believe
Some fairy had exchanged us as we lay
Two tiny foster-children in one cradle?
*Ros.* Well, be that as it may, Fife, it reminds me
Of what perhaps I should have thought before,
But better late than never—You know I love you,
As you, I know, love me, and loyally
Have follow'd me thus far in my wild venture:
Well! now then—having seen me safe thus far—
Safe if not wholly sound—over the rocks

Into the country where my business lies—
Why should not you return the way we came,
The storm all clear'd away, and, leaving me
(Who now shall want you, though not thank you, less,
Now that our horses gone) this side the ridge,
Find your way back to dear old home again;
While I—Come, come!—
What, weeping, my poor fellow?—
*Fife.* Leave you here
Alone—my Lady—Lord! I mean my Lord—
In a strange country—among savages—
Oh, now I know—you would be rid of me
For fear my stumbling speech—
*Ros.* Oh, no, no, no!—
I want you with me for a thousand sakes
To which that is as nothing—I myself
More apt to let the secret out myself
Without your help at all—Come, come, cheer up!
And if you sing again, "Come weal, come woe,"
Let it be that; for we will never part
Until you give the signal.
*Fife.* 'Tis a bargain.
*Ros.* Now to begin, then. "Follow, follow me,
"You fairy elves that be."
*Fife.* Ay, and go on—
Something of "following darkness like a dream,"
For that we're after.
*Ros.* No, after the sun;
Trying to catch hold of his glittering skirts
That hang upon the mountain as he goes.
*Fife.* Ah, he's himself past catching—as you spoke
He heard what you were saying, and—just so—
Like some scared water-bird,

As we say in my country, *dōve* below.
*Ros.* Well, we must follow him as best we may.
Poland is no great country, and, as rich
In men and means, will but few acres spare
To lie beneath her barrier mountains bare.
We cannot, I believe, be very far
From mankind or their dwellings.
*Fife.* Send it so!
And well provided for man, woman, and beast.
No, not for beast. Ah, but my heart begins
To yearn for her—
*Ros.* Keep close, and keep your feet
From serving you as hers did.
*Fife.* As for beasts,
If in default of other entertainment,
We should provide them with ourselves to eat—
Bears, lions, wolves—
*Ros.* Oh, never fear.
*Fife.* Or else,
Default of other beasts, beastlier men,
Cannibals, Anthropophagi, bare Poles
Who never knew a tailor but by taste.
*Ros.* Look, look! Unless my fancy misconceive
With twilight—down among the rocks there, Fife—
Some human dwelling, surely—
Or think you but a rock torn from the rocks
In some convulsion like to-day's, and perch'd
Quaintly among them in mock-masonry?
*Fife.* Most likely that, I doubt.
*Ros.* No, no—for look!
A square of darkness opening in it—
*Fife.* Oh,
I don't half like such openings!—

*Ros.* Like the loom
Of night from which she spins her outer gloom—
*Fife.* Lord, Madam, pray forbear this tragic vein
In such a time and place—
*Ros.* And now again
Within that square of darkness, look! a light
That feels its way with hesitating pulse,
As we do, through the darkness that it drives
To blacken into deeper night beyond.
*Fife.* In which could we follow that light's example,
As might some English Bardolph with his nose,
We might defy the sunset—Hark, a chain!
*Ros.* And now a lamp, a lamp! And now the hand
That carries it.
*Fife.* Oh, Lord! that dreadful chain!
*Ros.* And now the bearer of the lamp; indeed
As strange as any in Arabian tale,
So giant-like, and terrible, and grand,
Spite of the skin he's wrapt in.
*Fife.* Why, 'tis his own:
Oh, 'tis some wild man of the woods; I've heard
They build and carry torches—
*Ros.* Never Ape
Bore such a brow before the heav'ns as that—
Chain'd as you say too!—
*Fife.* Oh, that dreadful chain!
*Ros.* And now he sets the lamp down by his side,
And with one hand clench'd in his tangled hair
And with a sigh as if his heart would break—

[*During this* SEGISMUND *has entered from the fortress, with a torch.*]

*Segismund.* Once more the storm has roar'd itself away,
Splitting the crags of God as it retires;

But sparing still what it should only blast,
This guilty piece of human handiwork,
And all that are within it. Oh, how oft,
How oft, within or here abroad, have I
Waited, and in the whisper of my heart
Pray'd for the slanting hand of heav'n to strike
The blow myself I dared not, out of fear
Of that Hereafter, worse, they say, than here,
Plunged headlong in, but, till dismissal waited,
To wipe at last all sorrow from men's eyes,
And make this heavy dispensation clear.
Thus have I borne till now, and still endure,
Crouching in sullen impotence day by day,
Till some such out-burst of the elements
Like this rouses the sleeping fire within;
And standing thus upon the threshold of
Another night about to close the door
Upon one wretched day to open it
On one yet wretcheder because one more;—
Once more, you savage heav'ns, I ask of you—
I, looking up to those relentless eyes
That, now the greater lamp is gone below,
Begin to muster in the listening skies;
In all the shining circuits you have gone
About this theatre of human woe,
What greater sorrow have you gazed upon
Than down this narrow chink you witness still;
And which, did you yourselves not fore-devise,
You register'd for others to fulfil!

*Fife.* This is some Laureate at a birth-day ode:
No wonder we went rhyming.

*Ros.* Hush! And now,
See, starting to his feet, he strides about

Far as his tether'd steps—
*Seg.* And if the chain
You help'd to rivet round me did contract
Since guiltless infancy from guilt in act;
Of what in aspiration or in thought
Guilty, but in resentment of the wrong
That wreaks revenge on wrong I never wrought
By excommunication from the free
Inheritance that all created life,
Beside myself, is born to—from the wings
That range your own immeasurable blue,
Down to the poor, mute, scale-imprison'd things,
That yet are free to wander, glide, and pass
About that under-sapphire, whereinto
Yourselves transfusing you yourselves englass!
*Ros.* What mystery is this?
*Fife.* Why, the man's mad:
That's all the mystery. That's why he's chain'd—
And why—
*Seg.* Nor Nature's guiltless life alone—
But that which lives on blood and rapine; nay,
Charter'd with larger liberty to slay
Their guiltless kind, the tyrants of the air
Soar zenith-upward with their screaming prey,
Making pure heav'n drop blood upon the stage
Of under earth, where lion, wolf, and bear,
And they that on their treacherous velvet wear
Figure and constellation like your own,*

* "Some report that they"—(panthers)—"have one marke on the shoulders resembling the moone, growing and decreasing as she doth, sometimes showing a full compasse, and otherwhiles hollowed and pointed with tips like the hornes."—*Philemon Holland's Pliny*, b. viii. c. 17.

With their still living slaughter bound away
Over the barriers of the mountain cage,
Against which one, blood-guiltless, and endued
With aspiration and with aptitude
Transcending other creatures, day by day
Beats himself mad with unavailing rage!

*Fife.* Why, that must be the meaning of my mule's Rebellion—

*Ros.* Hush!

*Seg.* But then if murder be
The law by which not only conscience-blind
Creatures, but man too prospers with his kind;
Who leaving all his guilty fellows free,
Under your fatal auspice and divine
Compulsion, leagued in some mysterious ban
Against one innocent and helpless man,
Abuse their liberty to murder mine:
And sworn to silence, like their masters mute
In heav'n, and like them twiring through the mask
Of darkness, answering to all I ask,
Point up to them whose work they execute!

*Ros.* Ev'n as I thought, some poor unhappy wretch,
By man wrong'd, wretched, unrevenged, as I!
Nay, so much worse than I, as by those chains
Clipt of the means of self-revenge on those
Who lay on him what they deserve. And I,
Who taunted Heav'n a little while ago
With pouring all its wrath upon my head—
Alas! like him who caught the cast-off husk
Of what another bragg'd of feeding on,
Here's one that from the refuse of my sorrows
Could gather all the banquet he desires!
Poor soul, poor soul!

*Fife.* Speak lower—he will hear you.
*Ros.* And if he should, what then? Why, if he would,
He could not harm me—Nay, and if he could,
Methinks I'd venture something of a life
I care so little for—
*Seg.* Who's that? Clotaldo? Who are you, I say,
That, venturing in these forbidden rocks,
Have lighted on my miserable life,
And your own death?
*Ros.* You would not hurt me, surely?
*Seg.* Not I; but those that, iron as the chain
In which they slay me with a lingering death,
Will slay you with a sudden—Who are you?
*Ros.* A stranger from across the mountain there,
Who, having lost his way in this strange land
And coming night, drew hither to what seem'd
A human dwelling hidden in these rocks,
And where the voice of human sorrow soon
Told him it was so.
*Seg.* Ay? But nearer—nearer—
That by this smoky supplement of day
But for a moment I may see who speaks
So pitifully sweet.
*Fife.* Take care! take care!
*Ros.* Alas, poor man, that I, myself so helpless,
Could better help you than by barren pity,
And my poor presence—
*Seg.* Oh, might that be all!
But that—a few poor moments—and, alas!
The very bliss of having, and the dread
Of losing, under such a penalty
As every moment's having runs more near,
Stifles the very utterance and resource

They cry for quickest; till from sheer despair
Of holding thee, methinks myself would tear
To pieces—

*Fife.* There, his word's enough for it.

*Seg.* Oh, think, if you who move about at will,
And live in sweet communion with your kind,
After an hour lost in these lonely rocks
Hunger and thirst after some human voice
To drink, and human face to feed upon;
What must one do where all is mute, or harsh,
And ev'n the naked face of cruelty
Were better than the mask it works beneath?—
Across the mountain then! Across the mountain!
What if the next world which they tell one of
Be only next across the mountain then,
Though I must never see it till I die,
And you one of its angels?

*Ros.* Alas! Alas!
No angel! And the face you think so fair,
'Tis but the dismal frame-work of these rocks
That makes it seem so; and the world I come from
Alas, alas, too many faces there
Are but fair vizors to black hearts below,
Or only serve to bring the wearer woe!
But to yourself—If haply the redress
That I am here upon may help to yours.
I heard you tax the heav'ns with ordering,
And men for executing, what, alas!
I now behold. But why, and who they are
Who do, and you who suffer—

*Seg.* (*pointing upwards*). Ask of them,
Whom, as to-night, I have so often ask'd,
And ask'd in vain.

*Ros.* But surely, surely—
*Seg.* Hark!
The trumpet of the watch to shut us in.
Oh, should they find you!—Quick! Behind the rocks!
To-morrow—if to-morrow—
*Ros.* (*flinging her sword toward him*). Take my sword!

ROSAURA *and* FIFE *hide in the rocks; Enter* CLOTALDO.

*Clotaldo.* These stormy days you like to see the last of
Are but ill opiates, Segismund, I think,
For night to follow: and to-night you seem
More than your wont disorder'd. What! A sword?
Within there!

*Enter* SOLDIERS *with black vizors and torches.*

*Fife.* Here's a pleasant masquerade!
*Clo.* Whosever watch this was
Will have to pay head-reckoning. Meanwhile,
This weapon had a wearer. Bring him here,
Alive or dead.
*Seg.* Clotaldo! good Clotaldo!—
*Clo.* (*to Soldiers who enclose Segismund; others searching the rocks*). You know your duty.
*Soldiers* (*bringing in Rosaura and Fife*). Here are two of them,
Whoever more to follow—
*Clo.* Who are you,
That in defiance of known proclamation
Are found, at night-fall too, about this place?
*Fife.* Oh, my Lord, she—I mean he—
*Ros.* Silence, Fife,
And let me speak for both.—Two foreign men,
To whom your country and its proclamations

Are equally unknown; and, had we known,
Ourselves not masters of our lawless beasts
That, terrified by the storm among your rocks,
Flung us upon them to our cost.

*Fife.* My mule—

*Clo.* Foreigners? Of what country?

*Ros.* Muscovy.

*Clo.* And whither bound?

*Ros.* Hither—if this be Poland;
But with no ill design on her, and therefore
Taking it ill that we should thus be stopt
Upon her threshold so uncivilly.

*Clo.* Whither in Poland?

*Ros.* To the capital.

*Clo.* And on what errand?

*Ros.* Set me on the road,
And you shall be the nearer to my answer.

*Clo.* (*aside*). So resolute and ready to reply,
And yet so young—and—(*aloud*) Well,—
Your business was not surely with the man
We found you with?

*Ros.* He was the first we saw,—
And strangers and benighted, as we were,
As you too would have done in a like case,
Accosted him at once.

*Clo.* Ay, but this sword?

*Ros.* I flung it toward him.

*Clo.* Well, and why?

*Ros.* And why?
But to revenge himself on those who thus
Injuriously misuse him.

*Clo.* So—so—so!
'Tis well such resolution wants a beard—

And, I suppose, is never to attain one.
Well, I must take you both, you and your sword,
Prisoners.

*Fife* (*offering a cudgel*). Pray take mine, and welcome, sir:
I'm sure I gave it to that mule of mine
To mighty little purpose.

*Ros.* Mine you have;
And may it win us some more kindliness
Than we have met with yet.

*Clo.* (*examining the sword*). More mystery!
How came you by this weapon?

*Ros.* From my father.

*Clo.* And do you know whence he?

*Ros.* Oh, very well:
From one of this same Polish realm of yours,
Who promised a return, should come the chance,
Of courtesies that he received himself
In Muscovy, and left this pledge of it—
Not likely yet, it seems, to be redeem'd.

*Clo.* (*aside*). Oh, wondrous chance—or wondrous Providence!
The sword that I myself in Muscovy,
When these white hairs were black, for keepsake left
Of obligation for a like return
To him who saved me wounded as I lay
Fighting against his country; took me home;
Tended me like a brother till recover'd,
Perchance to fight against him once again—
And now my sword put back into my hand
By his—if not his son—still, as so seeming,
By me, as first devoir of gratitude,
To seem believing, till the wearer's self
See fit to drop the ill-dissembling mask.

(*Aloud*) Well, a strange turn of fortune has arrested
The sharp and sudden penalty that else
Had visited your rashness or mischance:
In part, your tender youth too—pardon me,
And touch not where your sword is not to answer—
Commends you to my care; not your life only,
Else by this misadventure forfeited;
But ev'n your errand, which by happy chance,
Chimes with the very business I am on,
And calls me to the very point you aim at.

*Ros.* The capital?

*Clo.* Ay, the capital; and ev'n
That capital of capitals, the Court:
Where you may plead, and, I may promise, win
Pardon for this, you say unwilling, trespass,
And prosecute what else you have at heart,
With me to help you forward all I can;
Provided all in loyalty to those
To whom by natural allegiance
I first am bound to.

*Ros.* As you make, I take
Your offer: with like promise on my side
Of loyalty to you and those you serve,
Under like reservation for regards
Nearer and dearer still.

*Clo.* Enough, enough;
Your hand; a bargain on both sides. Meanwhile,
Here shall you rest to-night. The break of day
Shall see us both together on the way.

*Ros.* Thus then what I for misadventure blamed,
Directly draws me where my wishes aim'd. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *The Palace at Warsaw. Enter on one side* ASTOLFO, *Duke of Muscovy, with his train: and, on the other, the* PRINCESS ESTRELLA, *with hers.*

*Astolfo.* My royal cousin, if so near in blood,
Till this auspicious meeting scarcely known,
Till all that beauty promised in the bud
Is now to its consummate blossom blown,
Well met at last; and may—
*Estrella.* Enough, my Lord,
Of compliment devised for you by some
Court tailor, and, believe me, still too short
To cover the designful heart below.
*Ast.* Nay, but indeed, fair cousin—
*Est.* Ay, let Deed
Measure your words, indeed your flowers of speech
Ill with your iron equipage atone;
Irony indeed, and wordy compliment.
*Ast.* Indeed, indeed, you wrong me, royal cousin,
And fair as royal, misinterpreting
What, even for the end you think I aim at,
If false to you, were fatal to myself.
*Est.* Why, what else means the glittering steel, my Lord
That bristles in the rear of these fine words?
What can it mean, but, failing to cajole,
To fight or force me from my just pretension?
*Ast.* Nay, might I not ask ev'n the same of you,
The nodding helmets of whose men at arms
Out-crest the plumage of your lady court?
*Est.* But to defend what yours would force from me.
*Ast.* Might not I, lady, say the same of mine?
But not to come to battle, ev'n of words,

With a fair lady, and my kinswoman;
And as averse to stand before your face,
Defenceless, and condemn'd in your disgrace,
Till the good king be here to clear it all—
Will you vouchsafe to hear me?

*Est.* As you will.

*Ast.* You know that, when about to leave this world,
Our royal grandsire, King Alfonso, left
Three children; one a son, Basilio,
Who wears—long may he wear!—the crown of Poland;
And daughters twain: of whom the elder was
Your mother, Clorileña, now some while
Exalted to a more than mortal throne;
And Recisunda, mine, the younger sister,
Who, married to the Prince of Muscovy,
Gave me the light which may she live to see
Herself for many, many years to come.
Meanwhile, good King Basilio, as you know,
Deep in abstruser studies than this world,
And busier with the stars than lady's eyes,
Has never by a second marriage yet
Replaced, as Poland ask'd of him, the heir
An early marriage brought and took away;
His young queen dying with the son she bore him:
And in such alienation grown so old
As leaves no other hope of heir to Poland
Than his two sisters' children; you, fair cousin,
And me; for whom the Commons of the realm
Divide themselves into two several factions;
Whether for you, the elder sister's child;
Or me, born of the younger, but, they say,
My natural prerogative of man
Outweighing your priority of birth.

Which discord growing loud and dangerous,
Our uncle, King Basilio, doubly sage
In prophesying and providing for
The future, as to deal with it when come,
Bids us here meet to-day in solemn council
Our several pretensions to compose.
And, but the martial out-burst that proclaims
His coming, makes all further parley vain,
Unless my bosom, by which only wise
I prophesy, now wrongly prophesies,
By such a happy compact as I dare
But glance at till the Royal Sage declare.

(*Trumpets, &c. Enter* KING BASILIO *with his Council.*)

*All.* The King! God save the King!
*Estrella.* } (*Kneeling.*) Oh, Royal Sir!—
*Astolfo.* } God save your Majesty!—
*King.* Rise, both of you,
Rise to my arms, Astolfo and Estrella;
As my two sisters' children always mine,
Now more than ever, since myself and Poland
Solely to you for our succession look'd.
And now give ear, you and your several factions,
And you, the Peers and Princes of this realm,
While I reveal the purport of this meeting
In words whose necessary length I trust
No unsuccessful issue shall excuse.
You and the world who have surnamed me "Sage"
Know that I owe that title, if my due,
To my long meditation on the book
Which ever lying open overhead—
The book of heav'n, I mean—so few have read;
Whose golden letters on whose sapphire leaf,

Distinguishing the page of day and night,
And all the revolution of the year;
So with the turning volume where they lie
Still changing their prophetic syllables,
They register the destinies of men:
Until with eyes that, dim with years indeed,
Are quicker to pursue the stars that rule them,
I get the start of Time, and from his hand
The wand of tardy revelation draw.
Oh, had the self-same heav'n upon his page
Inscribed my death ere I should read my life
And, by fore-casting of my own mischance,
Play not the victim but the suicide
In my own tragedy!—But you shall hear.
You know how once, as kings must for their people,
And only once, as wise men for themselves,
I woo'd and wedded: know too that my Queen
In childing died; but not, as you believe,
With her, the son she died in giving life to.
For, as the hour of birth was on the stroke,
Her brain conceiving with her womb, she dream'd
A serpent tore her entrail. And, too surely
(For evil omen seldom speaks in vain)
The man-child breaking from that living tomb
That makes our birth the antitype of death,
Man-grateful, for the life she gave him paid
By killing her: and with such circumstance
As suited such unnatural tragedy;
He coming into light, if light it were
That darken'd at his very horoscope,
When heaven's two champions—sun and moon I mean-
Suffused in blood upon each other fell
In such a raging duel of eclipse

As hath not terrified the universe
Since that which wept in blood the death of Christ:
When the dead walk'd, the waters turn'd to blood,
Earth and her cities totter'd, and the world
Seem'd shaken to its last paralysis.
In such a paroxysm of dissolution
That son of mine was born; by that first act
Heading the monstrous catalogue of crime,
I found fore-written in his horoscope;
As great a monster in man's history
As was in nature his nativity;
So savage, bloody, terrible, and impious,
Who, should he live, would tear his country's entrails,
As by his birth his mother's; with which crime
Beginning, he should clench the dreadful tale
By trampling on his father's silver head.
All which fore-reading, and his act of birth
Fate's warrant that I read his life aright;
To save his country from his mother's fate,
I gave abroad that he had died with her
His being slew: with midnight secrecy
I had him carried to a lonely tower
Hewn from the mountain-barriers of the realm,
And under strict anathema of death
Guarded from men's inquisitive approach,
Save from the trusty few one needs must trust;
Who while his fasten'd body they provide
With salutary garb and nourishment,
Instruct his soul in what no soul may miss
Of holy faith, and in such other lore
As may solace his life-imprisonment,
And tame perhaps the Savage prophesied
Toward such a trial as I aim at now,

And now demand your special hearing to.
What in this fearful business I have done,
Judge whether lightly or maliciously,—
I, with my own and only flesh and blood,
And proper lineal inheritor!
I swear, had his foretold atrocities
Touch'd me alone, I had not saved myself
At such a cost to him; but as a king,—
A Christian king,—I say, advisedly,
Who would devote his people to a tyrant
Worse than Caligula fore-chronicled?
But even this not without grave mis-giving,
Lest by some chance mis-reading of the stars,
Or mis-direction of what rightly read,
I wrong my son of his prerogative,
And Poland of her rightful sovereign.
For, sure and certain prophets as the stars,
Although they err not, he who reads them may:
Or rightly reading—seeing there is One
Who governs them, as, under Him, they us,
We are not sure if the rough diagram
They draw in heav'n and we interpret here,
Be sure of operation, if the Will
Supreme, that sometimes for some special end
The course of providential nature breaks
By miracle, may not of these same stars
Cancel his own first draft, or overrule
What else fore-written all else overrules.
As, for example, should the Will Almighty
Permit the Free-will of particular man
To break the meshes of else strangling fate—
Which Free-will, fearful of foretold abuse,
I have myself from my own son for-closed

From ever possible self-extrication;
A terrible responsibility,
Not to the conscience to be reconciled
Unless opposing almost certain evil
Against so slight contingency of good.
Well—thus perplex'd, I have resolved at last
To bring the thing to trial: whereunto
Here have I summon'd you, my Peers, and you
Whom I more dearly look to, failing him,
As witnesses to that which I propose;
And thus propose the doing it. Clotaldo,
Who guards my son with old fidelity,
Shall bring him hither from his tower by night,
Lockt in a sleep so fast as by my art
I rivet to within a link of death,
But yet from death so far, that next day's dawn
Shall wake him up upon the royal bed,
Complete in consciousness and faculty,
When with all princely pomp and retinue
My loyal Peers with due obeisance
Shall hail him Segismund, the Prince of Poland.
Then if with any show of human kindness
He fling discredit, not upon the stars,
But upon me, their misinterpreter;
With all apology mistaken age
Can make to youth it never meant to harm,
To my son's forehead will I shift the crown
I long have wish'd upon a younger brow;
And in religious humiliation,
For what of worn-out age remains to me,
Entreat my pardon both of Heav'n and him
For tempting destinies beyond my reach.
But if, as I misdoubt, at his first step

The hoof of the predicted savage shows;
Before predicted mischief can be done,
The self-same sleep that loosed him from the chain
Shall re-consign him, not to loose again.
Then shall I, having lost that heir direct,
Look solely to my sisters' children twain;
Each of a claim so equal as divides
The voice of Poland to their several sides,
But, as I trust, to be entwined ere long
Into one single wreath so fair and strong
As shall at once all difference atone,
And cease the realm's division with their own.
Cousins and Princes, Peers and Councillors,
Such is the purport of this invitation,
And such is my design. Whose furtherance
If not as Sovereign, if not as Seer,
Yet one whom these white locks, if nothing else,
To patient acquiescence consecrate,
I now demand and even supplicate.

*Ast.* Such news, and from such lips, may well suspend
The tongue to loyal answer most attuned;
But if to me as spokesman of my faction
Your Highness looks for answer; I reply
For one and all—Let Segismund, whom now
We first hear tell of as your living heir,
Appear, and but in your sufficient eye
Approve himself worthy to be your son,
Then we will hail him Poland's rightful heir.
What says my cousin?

*Est.* Ay, with all my heart.
But if my youth and sex upbraid me not
That I should dare ask of so wise a king—

*King.* Ask, ask, fair cousin! Nothing, I am sure,

Not well consider'd; nay, if 'twere, yet nothing
But pardonable from such lips as those.
*Est.* Then, with your pardon, Sir—If Segismund,
My cousin, whom I shall rejoice to hail
As Prince of Poland too, as you propose,
Be to a trial coming upon which
More, as I think, than life itself depends,
Why, Sir, with sleep-disorder'd senses brought
To this uncertain contest with his stars?
*King.* Well ask'd indeed! As wisely be it answer'd!—
*Because* it is uncertain, see you not?
For as I think I can discern between
The sudden flaws of a sleep-startled man,
And of the savage thing we have to dread;
If but bewilder'd, dazzled, and uncouth,
As might the sanest and the civilest
In circumstance so strange—nay, more than that,
If moved to any out-break short of blood,
All shall be well with him; and how much more,
If 'mid the magic turmoil of the change,
He shall so calm a resolution show
As scarce to reel beneath so great a blow!
But if with savage passion uncontroll'd
He lay about him like the brute foretold,
And must as suddenly be caged again;
Then what redoubled anguish and despair,
From that brief flash of blissful liberty
Remitted—and for ever—to his chain!
Which so much less, if on the stage of glory
Enter'd and exited through such a door
Of sleep as makes a dream of all between.
*Est.* Oh kindly answer, Sir, to question that
To charitable courtesy less wise

Might call for pardon rather! I shall now
Gladly, what, uninstructed, loyally
I should have waited.
*Ast.* Your Highness doubts not me,
Nor how my heart follows my cousin's lips,
Whatever way the doubtful balance fall,
Still loyal to your bidding.
*Omnes.* So say all.
*King.* I hoped, and did expect, of all no less—
And sure no sovereign ever needed more
From all who owe him love or loyalty.
For what a strait of time I stand upon,
When to this issue not alone I bring
My son your Prince, but ev'n myself your King:
And, whichsoever way for him it turn,
Of less than little honour to myself.
For if this coming trial justify
My thus withholding from my son his right,
Is not the judge himself justified in
The father's shame? And if the judge proved wrong,
My son withholding from his right thus long,
Shame and remorse to judge and father both:
Unless remorse and shame together drown'd
In having what I flung for worthless found.
But come—already weary with your travel,
And ill refresh'd by this strange history,
Until the hours that draw the sun from heav'n
Unite us at the customary board,
Each to his several chamber: you to rest;
I to contrive with old Clotaldo best
The method of a stranger thing than old
Time has as yet among his records told. [*Exeunt.*

## ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Throne-room in the Palace. Music within. Enter* KING *and* CLOTALDO, *meeting a Lord in waiting.*

*King.* You, for a moment beckon'd from your office,
Tell me thus far how goes it. In due time
The potion left him?
*Lord.* At the very hour
To which your Highness temper'd it. Yet not
So wholly but some lingering mist still hung
About his dawning senses—which to clear,
We fill'd and handed him a morning drink
With sleep's specific antidote suffused;
And while with princely raiment we invested
What nature surely modell'd for a Prince—
All but the sword—as you directed—
*King.* Ay—
*Lord.* If not too loudly, yet emphatically
Still with the title of a Prince address'd him.
*King.* How bore he that?
*Lord.* With all the rest, my liege,
I will not say so like one in a dream
As one himself misdoubting that he dream'd.
*King.* So far so well, Clotaldo, either way,
And best of all if tow'rd the worse I dread.
But yet no violence?—
*Lord.* At most, impatience;
Wearied perhaps with importunities
We yet were bound to offer.
*King.* Oh, Clotaldo!
Though thus far well, yet would myself had drunk
The potion he revives from! such suspense

Crowds all the pulses of life's residue
Into the present moment; and, I think,
Whichever way the trembling scale may turn,
Will leave the crown of Poland for some one
To wait no longer than the setting sun!

*Clo.* Courage, my liege! The curtain is undrawn,
And each must play his part out manfully,
Leaving the rest to heav'n.

*King.* Whose written words
If I should misinterpret or transgress!
But as you say—

(*To the Lord, who exit*). You, back to him at once;
Clotaldo, you, when he is somewhat used
To the new world of which they call him Prince,
Where place and face, and all, is strange to him,
With your known features and familiar garb
Shall then, as chorus to the scene, accost him,
And by such earnest of that old and too
Familiar world, assure him of the new.
Last in the strange procession, I myself
Will by one full and last development
Complete the plot for that catastrophe
That he must put to all; God grant it be
The crown of Poland on his brows!—Hark! hark!—
Was that his voice within?—Now louder—Oh,
Clotaldo, what! so soon begun to roar!—
Again! above the music— But betide
What may, until the moment, we must hide.

[*Exeunt* KING *and* CLOTALDO.

*Segismund* (*within*). Forbear! I stifle with your perfume!
cease
Your crazy salutations! peace, I say—
Begone, or let me go, ere I go mad

With all this babble, mummery, and glare,
For I am growing dangerous—Air! room! air!—
[*He rushes in. Music ceases.*
Oh but to save the reeling brain from wreck
With its bewilder'd senses!—
[*He covers his eyes for awhile.*
What! Ev'n now
That Babel left behind me, but my eyes
Pursued by the same glamour, that—unless
Alike bewitch'd too—the confederate sense
Vouches for palpable: bright-shining floors
That ring hard answer back to the stamp'd heel,
And shoot up airy columns marble-cold,
That, as they climb, break into golden leaf
And capital, till they embrace aloft
In clustering flower and fruitage over walls
Hung with such purple curtain as the West
Fringes with such a gold; or over-laid
With sanguine-glowing semblances of men,
Each in his all but living action busied,
Or from the wall they look from, with fix'd eyes
Pursuing me; and one most strange of all
That, as I pass'd the crystal on the wall,
Look'd from it—left it—and as I return,
Returns, and looks me face to face again—
Unless some false reflection of my brain,
The outward semblance of myself—Myself?
How know that tawdry shadow for myself,
But that it moves as I move; lifts his hand
With mine; each motion echoing so close
The immediate suggestion of the will
In which myself I recognize—Myself!—
What, this fantastic Segismund the same

Who last night, as for all his nights before,
Lay down to sleep in wolf-skin on the ground
In a black turret which the wolf howl'd round,
And woke again upon a golden bed,
Round which as clouds about a rising sun,
In scarce less glittering caparison,
Gather'd gay shapes that, underneath a breeze
Of music, handed him upon their knees
The wine of heaven in a cup of gold,
And still in soft melodious under-song
Hailing me Prince of Poland!—"Segismund,"
They said, "Our Prince! The Prince of Poland!" and
Again, "Oh, welcome, welcome, to his own,
"Our own Prince Segismund—"
Oh, but a blast—
One blast of the rough mountain air! one look
At the grim features—(*He goes to the window*)
What they disvizor'd also! shatter'd chaos
Cast into stately shape and masonry,
Between whose channel'd and perspective sides
Compact with rooted towers, and flourishing
To heav'n with gilded pinnacle and spire,
Flows the live current ever to and fro
With open aspect and free step!——Clotaldo!
Clotaldo!—calling as one scarce dares call
For him who suddenly might break the spell
One fears to walk without him—Why, that I,
With unencumber'd step as any there,
Go stumbling through my glory—feeling for
That iron leading-string—ay, for myself—
For that fast-anchor'd self of yesterday,
Of yesterday, and all my life before,
Ere drifted clean from self-identity

Upon the fluctuation of to-day's
Mad whirling circumstance!—And, fool, why not?
If reason, sense, and self-identity
Obliterated from a worn-out brain,
Art thou not maddest striving to be sane,
And catching at that Self of yesterday
That, like a leper's rags, best flung away!
Or if not mad, then dreaming—dreaming?—well—
Dreaming then—Or, if self to self be true,
Not mock'd by that, but as poor souls have been
By those who wrong'd them, to give wrong new relish?
Or have those stars indeed they told me of
As masters of my wretched life of old,
Into some happier constellation roll'd,
And brought my better fortune out on earth
Clear as themselves in heav'n!—Prince Segismund
They call'd me—and at will I shook them off—
Will they return again at my command
Again to call me so?—Within there! You!
Segismund calls—Prince Segismund—

(*He has seated himself on the throne. Enter* CHAMBERLAIN, *with lords in waiting.*)

*Chamb.* I rejoice
That unadvised of any but the voice
Of royal instinct in the blood, your Highness
Has ta'en the chair that you were born to fill.

*Seg.* The chair?

*Chamb.* The royal throne of Poland, Sir,
Which may your Royal Highness keep as long
As he that now rules from it shall have ruled
When heav'n has call'd him to itself.

*Seg.* When he?—

*Chamb.* Your royal father, King Basilio, Sir.
*Seg.* My royal father—King Basilio.
You see I answer but as Echo does,
Not knowing what she listens or repeats.
This is my throne—this is my palace—Oh,
But this out of the window?—
*Chamb.* Warsaw, Sir,
Your capital—
*Seg.* And all the moving people?
*Chamb.* Your subjects and your vassals like ourselves.
*Seg.* Ay, ay—my subjects—in my capital—
Warsaw—and I am Prince of it—You see
It needs much iteration to strike sense
Into the human echo.
*Chamb.* Left awhile
In the quick brain, the word will quickly to
Full meaning blow.
*Seg.* You think so?
*Chamb.* And meanwhile
Lest our obsequiousness, which means no worse
Than customary honour to the Prince
We most rejoice to welcome, trouble you,
Should we retire again? or stand apart?
Or would your Highness have the music play
Again, which meditation, as they say,
So often loves to float upon?
*Seg.* The music?
No—yes—perhaps the trumpet—(*Aside*) Yet if that
Brought back the troop!
*A Lord.* The trumpet! There again
How trumpet-like spoke out the blood of Poland!
*Chamb.* Before the morning is far up, your Highness
Will have the trumpet marshalling your soldiers

Under the Palace windows.

*Seg.* Ah, my soldiers—
My soldiers—not black-vizor'd?—

*Chamb.* Sir?

*Seg.* No matter.
But—one thing—for a moment—in your ear—
Do you know one Clotaldo?

*Chamb.* Oh, my Lord,
He and myself together, I may say,
Although in different vocations,
Have silver'd in your royal father's service;
And, as I trust, with both of us a few
White hairs to fall in yours.

*Seg.* Well said, well said!
Basilio, my father—well—Clotaldo—
Is he my kinsman too?

*Chamb.* Oh, my good Lord,
A General simply in your Highness' service,
Than whom your Highness has no trustier.

*Seg.* Ay, so you said before, I think. And you
With that white wand of yours—
Why, now I think on't, I have read of such
A silver-hair'd magician with a wand,
Who in a moment, with a wave of it,
Turn'd rags to jewels, clowns to emperors,
By some benigner magic than the stars
Spirited poor good people out of hand
From all their woes; in some enchanted sleep
Carried them off on cloud or dragon-back
Over the mountains, over the wide Deep,
And set them down to wake in Fairyland.

*Chamb.* Oh, my good Lord, you laugh at me—and I
Right glad to make you laugh at such a price:

You know me no enchanter: if I were,
I and my wand as much as your Highness',
As now your chamberlain—
*Seg.* My chamberlain?—
And these that follow you?—
*Chamb.* On you, my Lord;
Your Highness' lords in waiting.
*Seg.* Lords in waiting.
Well, I have now learn'd to repeat, I think,
If only but by rote—This is my palace,
And this my throne—which unadvised—And that
Out of the window there my Capital;
And all the people moving up and down
My subjects and my vassals like yourselves,
My chamberlain—and lords in waiting—and
Clotaldo—and Clotaldo?—
You are an aged, and seem a reverend man—
You do not—though his fellow-officer—
You do not mean to mock me?
*Chamb.* Oh, my Lord!
*Seg.* Well then—If no magician, as you say,
Yet setting me a riddle, that my brain,
With all its senses whirling, cannot solve,
Yourself or one of these with you must answer—
How I—that only last night fell asleep
Not knowing that the very soil of earth
I lay down—chain'd—to sleep upon was Poland—
Awake to find myself the Lord of it,
With Lords, and Generals, and Chamberlains,
And ev'n my very Gaoler, for my vassals!

*Enter suddenly* CLOTALDO.

*Clotaldo.* Stand all aside

That I may put into his hand the clue
To lead him out of this amazement. Sir,
Vouchsafe your Highness from my bended knee
Receive my homage first.
*Seg.* Clotaldo! What,
At last—his old self—undisguised where all
Is masquerade—to end it!—You kneeling too!
What! have the stars you told me long ago
Laid that old work upon you, added this,
That, having chain'd your prisoner so long,
You loose his body now to slay his wits,
Dragging him—how I know not—whither scarce
I understand—dressing him up in all
This frippery, with your dumb familiars
Disvizor'd, and their lips unlockt to lie,
Calling him Prince and King, and, madman-like,
Setting a crown of straw upon his head?
*Clo.* Would but your Highness, as indeed I now
Must call you—and upon his bended knee
Never bent Subject more devotedly—
However all about you, and perhaps
You to yourself incomprehensiblest,
But rest in the assurance of your own
Sane waking senses, by these witnesses
Attested, till the story of it all,
Of which I bring a chapter, be reveal'd,
Assured of all you see and hear as neither
Madness nor mockery—
*Seg.* What then?
*Clo.* All it seems:
This palace with its royal garniture;
This capital of which it is the eye,
With all its temples, marts, and arsenals;

This realm of which this city is the head,
With all its cities, villages, and tilth,
Its armies, fleets, and commerce; all your own;
And all the living souls that make them up,
From those who now, and those who shall, salute you,
Down to the poorest peasant of the realm,
Your subjects—Who, though now their mighty voice
Sleeps in the general body unapprized,
Wait but a word from those about you now
To hail you Prince of Poland, Segismund.

*Seg.* All this is so?

*Clo.* As sure as anything
Is, or can be.

*Seg.* You swear it on the faith
You taught me—elsewhere?—

*Clo.* (*kissing the hilt of his sword*)—Swear it upon this
Symbol, and champion of the holy faith
I wear it to defend.

*Seg.* (*to himself*). My eyes have not deceived me, nor my ears,
With this transfiguration, nor the strain
Of royal welcome that arose and blew,
Breathed from no lying lips, along with it.
For here Clotaldo comes, his own old self,
Who, if not Lie and phantom with the rest—
(*Aloud*) Well then, all this is thus.
For have not these fine people told me so,
And you, Clotaldo, sworn it? And the Why
And Wherefore are to follow by and bye!
And yet—and yet—why wait for that which you
Who take your oath on it can answer—and
Indeed it presses hard upon my brain—
What I was asking of these gentlemen

When you came in upon us; how it is
That I—the Segismund you know so long—
No longer than the sun that rose to-day
Rose—and from what you know—
Rose to be Prince of Poland?
*Clo.* So to be
Acknowledged and entreated, sir.
*Seg.* So be
Acknowledged and entreated—
Well—But if now by all, by some at least
So known—if not entreated—heretofore—
Though not by you—For, now I think again,
Of what should be your attestation worth,
You that of all my questionable subjects
Who knowing what, yet left me where, I was,
You least of all, Clotaldo, till the dawn
Of this first day that told it to myself?
*Clo.* Oh, let your Highness draw the line across
Fore-written sorrow, and in this new dawn
Bury that long sad night.
*Seg.* Not ev'n the Dead,
Call'd to the resurrection of the blest,
Shall so directly drop all memory
Of woes and wrongs foregone!
*Clo.* But not resent—
Purged by the trial of that sorrow past
For full fruition of their present bliss.
*Seg.* But leaving with the Judge what, till this earth
Be cancell'd in the burning heav'ns, He leaves
His earthly delegates to execute,
Of retribution in reward to them
And woe to those who wrong'd them—Not as you,
Not you, Clotaldo, knowing not—And yet

Ev'n to the guiltiest wretch in all the realm,
Of any treason guilty short of that,
Stern usage—but assuredly not knowing,
Not knowing 'twas your sovereign lord, Clotaldo,
You used so sternly.
*Clo.* Ay, sir; with the same
Devotion and fidelity that now
Does homage to him for my sovereign.
*Seg.* Fidelity that held his Prince in chains!
*Clo.* Fidelity more fast than had it loosed him—
*Seg.* Ev'n from the very dawn of consciousness
Down at the bottom of the barren rocks,
Where scarce a ray of sunshine found him out,
In which the poorest beggar of my realm
At least to human-full proportion grows—
Me! Me—whose station was the kingdom's top
To flourish in, reaching my head to heav'n,
And with my branches overshadowing
The meaner growth below!
*Clo.* Still with the same
Fidelity—
*Seg.* To me!—
*Clo.* Ay, sir, to you,
Through that divine allegiance upon which
All Order and Authority is based;
Which to revolt against—
*Seg.* Were to revolt
Against the stars, belike!
*Clo.* And him who reads them;
And by that right, and by the sovereignty
He wears as you shall wear it after him;
Ay, one to whom yourself—
Yourself, ev'n more than any subject here,

Are bound by yet another and more strong
Allegiance—King Basilio—your Father—
*Seg.* Basilio—King—my father!—
*Clo.* Oh, my Lord,
Let me beseech you on my bended knee,
For your own sake—for Poland's—and for his,
Who, looking up for counsel to the skies,
Did what he did under authority
To which the kings of earth themselves are subject,
And whose behest not only he that suffers,
But he that executes, not comprehends,
But only He that orders it—
*Seg.* The King—
My father!—Either I am mad already,
Or that way driving fast—or I should know
That fathers do not use their children so,
Or men were loosed from all allegiance
To fathers, kings, and heav'n that order'd all.
But, mad or not, my hour is come, and I
Will have my reckoning—Either you lie,
Under the skirt of sinless majesty
Shrouding your treason; or if *that* indeed,
Guilty itself, take refuge in the stars
That cannot hear the charge, or disavow—
You, whether doer or deviser, who
Come first to hand, shall pay the penalty
By the same hand you owe it to—
(*Seizing Clotaldo's sword and about to strike him.*)

*Enter* ROSAURA *suddenly.*

*Rosaura.* Fie, my lord—forbear,
What! a young hand raised against silver hair!—
(*She retreats through the crowd.*)

*Seg.* Stay! stay!—What come and vanish'd as before—
I scarce remember how—but—

*Voices within.* Room for Astolfo, Duke of Muscovy!

*Enter* ASTOLFO.

*Astolfo.* Welcome, thrice welcome, the auspicious day,
When from the mountain where he darkling lay,
The Polish sun into the firmament
Sprung all the brighter for his late ascent,
And in meridian glory—

*Seg.* Where is he?
Why must I ask this twice?—

*A Lord.* The Page, my Lord?
I wonder at his boldness—

*Seg.* But I tell you
He came with Angel written in his face
As now it is, when all was black as hell
About, and none of you who now—he came,
And Angel-like flung me a shining sword
To cut my way through darkness; and again
Angel-like wrests it from me in behalf
Of one—whom I will spare for sparing him:
But he must come and plead with that same voice
That pray'd for me—in vain.

*Chamb.* He is gone for,
And shall attend your pleasure, sir. Meanwhile,
Will not your Highness, as in courtesy,
Return your royal cousin's greeting?

*Seg.* Whose?

*Chamb.* Astolfo, Duke of Muscovy, my Lord,
Saluted, and with gallant compliment
Welcomed you to your royal title.

*Seg.* (*to Astolfo*). Oh—
You knew of this then?

*Ast.* Knew of what, my Lord?
*Seg.* That I was Prince of Poland all the while,
And you my subject?
*Ast.* Pardon me, my Lord;
But some few hours ago myself I learn'd
Your dignity; but, knowing it, no more
Than when I knew it not, your subject.
*Seg.* What then?
*Ast.* Your Highness' chamberlain ev'n now has told you;
Astolfo, Duke of Muscovy,
Your father's sister's son; your cousin, sir:
And who as such, and in his own right Prince,
Expects from you the courtesy he shows.
*Chamb.* His Highness is as yet unused to Court,
And to the ceremonious interchange
Of compliment, especially to those
Who draw their blood from the same royal fountain.
*Seg.* Where is the lad? I weary of all this—
Prince, cousins, chamberlains, and compliments—
Where are my soldiers? Blow the trumpet, and
With one sharp blast scatter these butterflies,
And bring the men of iron to my side,
With whom a king feels like a king indeed!
*Voices within.* Within there! room for the Princess Estrella!

*Enter* ESTRELLA *with Ladies.*

*Estrella.* Welcome, my Lord, right welcome to the throne
That much too long has waited for your coming:
And, in the general voice of Poland, hear
A kinswoman and cousin's no less sincere.
*Seg.* Ay, this is welcome welcome-worth indeed,

And cousin cousin-worth! Oh, I have thus
Over the threshold of the mountain seen,
Leading a bevy of fair stars, the moon
Enter the court of heav'n—My kinswoman!
My cousin! But my subject?—

*Est.* If you please
To count your cousin for your subject, sir,
You shall not find her a disloyal.

*Seg.* Oh,
But there are twin stars in that heav'nly face,
That now I know for having over-ruled
Those evil ones that darken'd all my past,
And brought me forth from that captivity
To be the slave of her who set me free.

*Est.* Indeed, my Lord, these eyes have no such power
Over the past or present: but perhaps
They brighten at your welcome to supply
The little that a lady's speech commends;
And in the hope that, let whichever be
The other's subject, we may both be friends.

*Seg.* Your hand to that—But why does this warm hand
Shoot a cold shudder through me?

*Est.* In revenge
For likening me to that cold moon, perhaps.

*Seg.* Oh, but the lip whose music tells me so
Breathes of a warmer planet, and that lip
Shall remedy the treason of the hand!

(*He catches to embrace her*)

*Est.* Release me, sir!

*Chamb.* And pardon me, my Lord,
This lady is a Princess absolute,
As Prince he is who just saluted you,
And claims her by affiance.

*Seg.* Hence, old fool,
For ever thrusting that white stick of yours
Between me and my pleasure!
*Ast.* This cause is mine.
Forbear, sir—
*Seg.* What, sir mouth-piece, you again?
*Ast.* My Lord, I waive your insult to myself
In recognition of the dignity
You yet are new to, and that greater still
You look in time to wear. But for this lady—
Whom, if my cousin now, I hope to claim
Henceforth by yet a nearer, dearer name—
*Seg.* And what care I? She is my cousin too:
And if you be a Prince—well, am not I?
Lord of the very soil you stand upon?
By that, and by that right beside of blood
That like a fiery fountain hitherto
Pent in the rock leaps toward her at her touch,
Mine, before all the cousins in Muscovy!
You call me Prince of Poland, and yourselves
My subjects—traitors therefore to this hour,
Who let me perish all my youth away
Chain'd there among the mountains; till, forsooth,
Terrified at your treachery foregone,
You spirit me up here, I know not how,
Popinjay-like invest me like yourselves,
Choke me with scent and music that I loathe,
And, worse than all the music and the scent,
With false, long-winded, fulsome compliment,
That "Oh, you are my subjects!" and in word
Reiterating still obedience,
Thwart me in deed at every step I take:
When just about to wreak a just revenge

Upon that old arch-traitor of you all,
Filch from my vengeance him I hate; and him
I loved—the first and only face—till this—
I cared to look on in your ugly court—
And now when palpably I grasp at last
What hitherto but shadow'd in my dreams—
Affiances and interferences,
The first who dares to meddle with me more—
Princes and chamberlains and counsellors,
Touch her who dares!—

*Ast.* That dare I—

*Seg.* (*seizing him by the throat*). You dare!

*Chamb.* My Lord!—

*A Lord.* His strength 's a lion's—

*Voices within.* The King! The King!—

*Enter* KING.

*A Lord.* And on a sudden how he stands at gaze,
As might a wolf just fasten'd on his prey,
Glaring at a suddenly encounter'd lion.

*King.* And I that hither flew with open arms
To fold them round my son, must now return
To press them to an empty heart again!
(*He sits on the throne.*)

*Seg.* That is the King?—My father?—
(*After a long pause*). I have heard
That sometimes some blind instinct has been known
To draw to mutual recognition those
Of the same blood, beyond all memory
Divided, or ev'n never met before.
I know not how this is—perhaps in brutes
That live by kindlier instincts—but I know
That looking now upon that head whose crown

Pronounces him a sovereign king, I feel
No setting of the current in my blood
Tow'rd him as sire. How is 't with you, old man,
Tow'rd him they call your son?—
*King.* Alas! Alas!
*Seg.* Your sorrow, then?
*King.* Beholding what I do.
*Seg.* Ay, but how know this sorrow, that has grown
And moulded to this present shape of man,
As of your own creation?
*King.* Ev'n from birth.
*Seg.* But from that hour to this, near, as I think,
Some twenty such renewals of the year
As trace themselves upon the barren rocks,
I never saw you, nor you me—unless,
Unless, indeed, through one of those dark masks
Through which a son might fail to recognize
The best of fathers?
*King.* Be that as you will:
But, now we see each other face to face,
Know me as you I know; which did I not,
By whatsoever signs, assuredly
You were not here to prove it at my risk.
*Seg.* You are my father.
And is it true then, as Clotaldo swears,
'Twas you that from the dawning birth of one
Yourself brought into being,—you, I say,
Who stole his very birthright; not alone
That secondary and peculiar right
Of sovereignty, but even that prime
Inheritance that all men share alike,
And chain'd him—chain'd him!—like a wild beast's whelp,
Among as savage mountains, to this hour?

Answer if this be thus.

*King.* Oh, Segismund,
In all that I have done that seems to you,
And, without further hearing, fairly seems,
Unnatural and cruel—'twas not I,
But One who writes His order in the sky
I dared not misinterpret nor neglect,
Who knows with what reluctance—

*Seg.* Oh, those stars,
Those stars, that too far up from human blame
To clear themselves, or careless of the charge,
Still bear upon their shining shoulders all
The guilt men shift upon them!

*King.* Nay, but think:
Not only on the common score of kind,
But that peculiar count of sovereignty—
If not behind the beast in brain as heart,
How should I thus deal with my innocent child,
Doubly desired, and doubly dear when come,
As that sweet second-self that all desire,
And princes more than all, to root themselves
By that succession in their people's hearts?
Unless at that superior Will, to which
Not kings alone, but sovereign nature bows.

*Seg.* And what had those same stars to tell of me
That should compel a father and a king
So much against that double instinct?

*King.* That,
Which I have brought you hither, at my peril,
Against their written warning, to disprove,
By justice, mercy, human kindliness.

*Seg.* And therefore made yourself their instrument
To make your son the savage and the brute

They only prophesied?—Are you not afear'd,
Lest, irrespective as such creatures are
Of such relationship, the brute you made
Revenge the man you marr'd—like sire, like son,
To do by you as you by me have done?
*King.* You never had a savage heart from me;
I may appeal to Poland.
*Seg.* Then from whom?
If pure in fountain, poison'd by yourself
When scarce begun to flow.—To make a man
Not, as I see, degraded from the mould
I came from, nor compared to those about,
And then to throw your own flesh to the dogs!—
Why not at once, I say, if terrified
At the prophetic omens of my birth,
Have drown'd or stifled me, as they do whelps
Too costly or too dangerous to keep?
*King.* That, living, you might learn to live, and rule
Yourself and Poland.
*Seg.* By the means you took
To spoil for either?
*King.* Nay, but, Segismund!
You know not—cannot know—happily wanting
The sad experience on which knowledge grows,
How the too early consciousness of power
Spoils the best blood; nor whether for your long-
Constrain'd disheritance (which, but for me,
Remember, and for my relenting love
Bursting the bond of fate, had been eternal)
You have not now a full indemnity;
Wearing the blossom of your youth unspent
In the voluptuous sunshine of a court,
That often, by too early blossoming,

Too soon deflowers the rose of royalty.

*Seg.* Ay, but what some precocious warmth may spill,
May not an early frost as surely kill?

*King.* But, Segismund, my son, whose quick discourse
Proves I have not extinguish'd and destroy'd
The Man you charge me with extinguishing,
However it condemn me for the fault
Of keeping a good light so long eclipsed,
Reflect! This is the moment upon which
Those stars, whose eyes, although we see them not,
By day as well as night are on us still,
Hang watching up in the meridian heaven
Which way the balance turns; and if to you—
As by your dealing God decide it may,
To my confusion!—let me answer it
Unto yourself alone, who shall at once
Approve yourself to be your father's judge,
And sovereign of Poland in his stead,
By justice, mercy, self-sobriety,
And all the reasonable attributes
Without which, impotent to rule himself,
Others one cannot, and one must not rule;
But which if you but show the blossom of—
All that is past we shall but look upon
As the first out-fling of a generous nature
Rioting in first liberty; and if
This blossom do but promise such a flower
As promises in turn its kindly fruit:
Forthwith upon your brows the royal crown,
That now weighs heavy on my agèd brows,
I will devolve; and while I pass away
Into some cloister, with my Maker there
To make my peace in penitence and prayer,

Happily settle the disorder'd realm
That now cries loudly for a lineal heir.
*Seg.* And so—
When the crown falters on your shaking head,
And slips the sceptre from your palsied hand,
And Poland for her rightful heir cries out;
When not only your stol'n monopoly
Fails you of earthly power, but 'cross the grave
The judgment-trumpet of another world
Calls you to count for your abuse of this;
Then, oh then, terrified by the double danger,
You drag me from my den—
Boast not of giving up at last the power
You can no longer hold, and never rightly
Held, but in fee for him you robb'd it from;
And be assured your Savage, once let loose,
Will not be caged again so quickly; not
By threat or adulation to be tamed,
Till he have had his quarrel out with those
Who made him what he is.
*King.* Beware! Beware!
Subdue the kindled Tiger in your eye,
Nor dream that it was sheer necessity
Made me thus far relax the bond of fate,
And, with far more of terror than of hope
Threaten myself, my people, and the State.
Know that, if old, I yet have vigour left
To wield the sword as well as wear the crown;
And if my more immediate issue fail,
Not wanting scions of collateral blood,
Whose wholesome growth shall more than compensate
For all the loss of a distorted stem.
*Seg.* That will I straightway bring to trial—Oh,

After a revelation such as this,
The Last Day shall have little left to show
Of righted wrong and villany requited!
Nay, Judgment now beginning upon earth,
Myself, methinks, in right of all my wrongs,
Appointed heav'n's avenging minister,
Accuser, judge, and executioner,
Sword in hand, cite the guilty—First, as worst,
The usurper of his son's inheritance;
Him and his old accomplice, time and crime
Inveterate, and unable to repay
The golden years of life they stole away.
What, does he yet maintain his state, and keep
The throne he should be judged from? Down with him,
That I may trample on the false white head
So long has worn my crown! Where are my soldiers?
Of all my subjects and my vassals here
Not one to do my bidding? Hark! A trumpet!
The trumpet—

(*He pauses as the trumpet sounds as in* ACT I., *and masked Soldiers gradually fill in behind the Throne.*)

*King* (*rising before his throne*). Ay, indeed, the trumpet blows
A memorable note, to summon those
Who, if forthwith you fall not at the feet
Of him whose head you threaten with the dust,
Forthwith shall draw the curtain of the Past
About you; and this momentary gleam
Of glory, that you think to hold life-fast,
So coming, so shall vanish, as a dream.

*Seg.* He prophesies; the old man prophesies;
And, at his trumpet's summons, from the tower

The leash-bound shadows loosen'd after me
My rising glory reach and over-lour—
But, reach not I my height, he shall not hold,
But with me back to his own darkness!

(*He dashes toward the throne and is enclosed by the soldiers.*)

Traitors!
Hold off! Unhand me!—Am not I your king?
And you would strangle him!—
But I am breaking with an inward Fire
Shall scorch you off, and wrap me on the wings
Of conflagration from a kindled pyre
Of lying prophecies and prophet-kings
Above the extinguish'd stars—Reach me the sword
He flung me—Fill me such a bowl of wine
As that you woke the day with—

*King.* And shall close,—
But of the vintage that Clotaldo knows.

## ACT III.

### SCENE I.—*The Tower, &c., as in* ACT I. SCENE I. SEGISMUND, *as at first, and* CLOTALDO.

*Clotaldo.* Princes and princesses, and counsellors,
Fluster'd to right and left—my life made at—
But that was nothing—
Even the white-hair'd, venerable King
Seized on—Indeed, you made wild work of it;
And so discover'd in your outward action,
Flinging your arms about you in your sleep,
Grinding your teeth—and, as I now remember,

Woke mouthing out judgment and execution,
On those about you.
*Seg.* Ay, I did indeed.
*Clo.* Ev'n now your eyes stare wild; your hair stands up—
Your pulses throb and flutter, reeling still
Under the storm of such a dream—
*Seg.* A dream!
That seem'd as swearable reality
As what I wake in now.
*Clo.* Ay—wondrous how
Imagination in a sleeping brain
Out of the uncontingent senses draws
Sensations strong as from the real touch;
That we not only laugh aloud, and drench
With tears our pillow; but in the agony
Of some imaginary conflict, fight
And struggle—ev'n as you did; some, 'tis thought,
Under the dreamt-of stroke of death have died.
*Seg.* And what so very strange too—In that world
Where place as well as people all was strange,
Ev'n I almost as strange unto myself,
You only, you, Clotaldo—you, as much
And palpably yourself as now you are,
Came in this very garb you ever wore,
By such a token of the past, you said,
To assure me of that seeming present.
*Clo.* Ay?
*Seg.* Ay; and even told me of the very stars
You tell me here of—how in spite of them,
I was enlarged to all that glory.
*Clo.* Ay,
By the false spirits' nice contrivance thus

A little truth oft leavens all the false,
The better to delude us.
*Seg.* For you know
'Tis nothing but a dream?
*Clo.* Nay, you yourself
Know best how lately you awoke from that
You know you went to sleep on?—
Why, have you never dreamt the like before?
*Seg.* Never, to such reality.
*Clo.* Such dreams
Are oftentimes the sleeping exhalations
Of that ambition that lies smouldering
Under the ashes of the lowest fortune;
By which, when reason slumbers, or has lost
The reins of sensible comparison,
We fly at something higher than we are—
Scarce ever dive to lower—to be kings,
Or conquerors, crown'd with laurel or with gold,
Nay, mounting heav'n itself on eagle wings.
Which, by the way, now that I think of it,
May furnish us the key to this high flight—
That royal Eagle we were watching, and
Talking of as you went to sleep last night.
*Seg.* Last night? Last night?
*Clo.* Ay, do you not remember
Envying his immunity of flight,
As, rising from his throne of rock, he sail'd
Above the mountains far into the West,
That burn'd about him, while with poising wings
He darkled in it as a burning brand
Is seen to smoulder in the fire it feeds?
*Seg.* Last night—last night—Oh, what a day was that
Between that last night and this sad To-day!

*Clo.* And yet, perhaps,
Only some few dark moments, into which
Imagination, once lit up within
And unconditional of time and space,
Can pour infinities.
*Seg.* And I remember
How the old man they call'd the King, who wore
The crown of gold about his silver hair,
And a mysterious girdle round his waist,
Just when my rage was roaring at its height,
And after which it all was dark again,
Bid me beware lest all should be a dream.
*Clo.* Ay—there another speciality of dreams,
That once the dreamer 'gins to dream he dreams,
His foot is on the very verge of waking.
*Seg.* Would it had been upon the verge of death
That knows no waking—
Lifting me up to glory, to fall back,
Stunn'd, crippled—wretcheder than ev'n before.
*Clo.* Yet not so glorious, Segismund, if you
Your visionary honour wore so ill
As to work murder and revenge on those
Who meant you well.
*Seg.* Who meant me!—me! their Prince
Chain'd like a felon—
*Clo.* Stay, stay—Not so fast,
You dream'd the Prince, remember.
*Seg.* Then in dream
Revenged it only.
*Clo.* True. But as they say
Dreams are rough copies of the waking soul
Yet uncorrected of the higher Will,
So that men sometimes in their dreams confess

An unsuspected, or forgotten, self;
One must beware to check—ay, if one may,
Stifle ere born, such passion in ourselves
As makes, we see, such havoc with our sleep,
And ill reacts upon the waking day.
And, by the bye, for one test, Segismund,
Between such swearable realities—
Since Dreaming, Madness, Passion, are akin
In missing each that salutary rein
Of reason, and the guiding will of man:
One test, I think, of waking sanity
Shall be that conscious power of self-control,
To curb all passion, but much most of all
That evil and vindictive, that ill squares
With human, and with holy canon less,
Which bids us pardon ev'n our enemies,
And much more those who, out of no ill will,
Mistakenly have taken up the rod
Which heav'n, they think, has put into their hands.

*Seg.* I think I soon shall have to try again—
Sleep has not yet done with me.

*Clo.* Such a sleep.
Take my advice—'tis early yet—the sun
Scarce up above the mountain; go within,
And if the night deceived you, try anew
With morning; morning dreams they say come true.

*Seg.* Oh, rather pray for me a sleep so fast
As shall obliterate dream and waking too.

[*Exit into the tower.*

*Clo.* So sleep; sleep fast: and sleep away those two
Night-potions, and the waking dream between
Which dream thou must believe; and, if to see
Again, poor Segismund! that dream must be.—

And yet, and yet, in these our ghostly lives,
Half night, half day, half sleeping, half awake,
How if our waking life, like that of sleep,
Be all a dream in that eternal life
To which we wake not till we sleep in death?
How if, I say, the senses we now trust
For date of sensible comparison,—
Ay, ev'n the Reason's self that dates with them,
Should be in essence or intensity
Hereafter so transcended, and awoke
To a perceptive subtlety so keen
As to confess themselves befool'd before,
In all that now they will avouch for most?
One man—like this—but only so much longer
As life is longer than a summer's day,
Believed himself a king upon his throne,
And play'd at hazard with his fellows' lives,
Who cheaply dream'd away their lives to him.
The sailor dream'd of tossing on the flood:
The soldier of his laurels grown in blood:
The lover of the beauty that he knew
Must yet dissolve to dusty residue:
The merchant and the miser of his bags
Of finger'd gold; the beggar of his rags:
And all this stage of earth on which we seem
Such busy actors, and the parts we play'd,
Substantial as the shadow of a shade,
And Dreaming but a dream within a dream!

*Fife.* Was it not said, sir,
By some philosopher as yet unborn,
That any chimney-sweep who for twelve hours
Dreams himself king is happy as the king
Who dreams himself twelve hours a chimney-sweep?

*Clo.* A theme indeed for wiser heads than yours
To moralize upon—How came you here?—
*Fife.* Not of my own will, I assure you, sir.
No matter for myself: but I would know
About my mistress—I mean, master—
*Clo.* Oh,
Now I remember—Well, your master-mistress
Is well, and deftly on its errand speeds,
As you shall—if you can but hold your tongue.
Can you?
*Fife.* I'd rather be at home again.
*Clo.* Where you shall be the quicker if while here
You can keep silence.
*Fife.* I may whistle, then?
Which by the virtue of my name I do,
And also as a reasonable test
Of waking sanity—
*Clo.* Well, whistle then;
And for another reason you forgot,
That while you whistle, you can chatter not.
Only remember—if you quit this pass—
*Fife.* (His rhymes are out, or he had call'd it spot)—
*Clo.* A bullet brings you to.
I must forthwith to court to tell the King
The issue of this lamentable day,
That buries all his hope in night. (*To Fife*) Farewell.
Remember.
*Fife.* But a moment—but a word!
When shall I see my mis—mas—
*Clo.* Be content:
All in good time; and then, and not before,
Never to miss your master any more. [*Exit.*
*Fife.* Such talk of dreaming—dreaming—I begin

To doubt if I be dreaming I am Fife,
Who with a lad who call'd herself a boy
Because—I doubt there's some confusion here—
He wore no petticoat, came on a time
Riding from Muscovy on half a horse,
Who must have dreamt she was a horse entire,
To cant me off upon my hinder face
Under this tower, wall-eyed and musket-tongued,
With sentinels a-pacing up and down,
Crying All's well when all is far from well,
All the day long, and all the night, until
I dream—if what is dreaming be not waking—
Of bells a-tolling and processions rolling
With candles, crosses, banners, San-benitos,
Of which I wear the flamy-finingest,
Through streets and places throng'd with fiery faces
To some back platform—
Oh, I shall take a fire into my hand
With thinking of my own dear Muscovy—
Only just over that Sierra there,
By which we tumbled headlong into—No-land.
Now, if without a bullet after me,
I could but get a peep of my old home—
Perhaps of my own mule to take me there—
All's still—perhaps the gentlemen within
Are dreaming it is night behind their masks—
God send 'em a good nightmare!—Now then—Hark!
Voices—and up the rocks—and armèd men
Climbing like cats—Puss in the corner then. [*He hides.*

*Enter* SOLDIERS *cautiously up the rocks.*

*Captain.* This is the frontier pass, at any rate,
Where Poland ends and Muscovy begins.

*Soldier.* We must be close upon the tower, I know,
That half way up the mountain lies ensconced.
*Capt.* How know you that?
*Sol.* He told me so—the Page
Who put us on the scent.
*Sol. 2.* And, as I think,
Will soon be here to run it down with us.
*Capt.* Meantime, our horses on these ugly rocks
Useless, and worse than useless with their clatter—
Leave them behind, with one or two in charge,
And softly, softly, softly.

*Soldiers.*

— There it is!
— There what?—
— The tower—the fortress—
— That the tower!—
— That mouse-trap! We could pitch it down the rocks
With our own hands.
— The rocks it hangs among
Dwarf its proportions and conceal its strength;
Larger and stronger than you think.
— No matter;
No place for Poland's Prince to be shut up in.
At it at once!
*Capt.* No—no—I tell you wait—
Till those within give signal. For as yet
We know not who side with us, and the fort
Is strong in man and musket.
*Sol.* Shame to wait
For odds with such a cause at stake.
*Capt.* Because
Of such a cause at stake we wait for odds—

For if not won at once, for ever lost:
For any long resistance on their part
Would bring Basilio's force to succour them
Ere we had rescued him we come to rescue.
So softly, softly, softly, still—

*A Soldier* (*discovering Fife*). Hilloa!

*Soldiers.*

— Hilloa! Here's some one skulking—
— Seize and gag him!
— Stab him at once, say I: the only way
To make all sure.
— Hold, every man of you!
And down upon your knees!—Why, 'tis the Prince!
— The Prince!—
— Oh, I should know him anywhere,
And anyhow disguised.
— But the Prince is chain'd.
— And of a loftier presence—
— 'Tis he, I tell you;
Only bewilder'd as he was before.
God save your Royal Highness! On our knees
Beseech you answer us!

*Fife.* Just as you please.
Well—'tis this country's custom, I suppose,
To take a poor man every now and then
And set him on the throne; just for the fun
Of tumbling him again into the dirt.
And now my turn is come. 'Tis very pretty.

*Sol.* His wits have been distemper'd with their drugs.
But do you ask him, Captain.

*Capt.* On my knees,
And in the name of all who kneel with me,

I do beseech your Highness answer to
Your royal title.

*Fife.* Still, just as you please.
In my own poor opinion of myself—
But that may all be dreaming, which it seems
Is very much the fashion in this country—
No Polish prince at all, but a poor lad
From Muscovy; where only help me back,
I promise never to contest the crown
Of Poland with whatever gentleman
You fancy to set up.

*Soldiers.*

— From Muscovy?
— A spy then—
— Of Astolfo's—
— Spy! a spy!—
— Hang him at once!

*Fife.* No, pray don't dream of that!

*Sol.* How dared you then set yourself up for our Prince Segismund?

*Fife.* *I* set up!—I like that—
When 'twas yourselves be-siegesmunded me.

*Capt.* No matter—Look!—The signal from the tower. Prince Segismund!

*Sol.* (*from the tower*). Prince Segismund!

*Capt.* All's well.
Clotaldo safe secured?—

*Sol.* (*from the tower*). No—by ill luck,
Instead of coming in, as we had look'd for,
He sprang on horse at once, and off at gallop.

*Capt.* To Court, no doubt—a blunder that—And yet
Perchance a blunder that may work as well

As better forethought. Having no suspicion,
So will he carry none where his not going
Were of itself suspicious. But of those
Within, who side with us?

*Sol.* Oh, one and all
To the last man, persuaded or compell'd.

*Capt.* Enough: whatever be to be retrieved,
No moment to be lost. For though Clotaldo
Have no revolt to tell of in the tower,
The capital will soon awake to ours,
And the King's force come blazing after us.
Where is the Prince?

*Sol.* Within; so fast asleep
We woke him not ev'n striking off the chain
We had so cursedly holp bind him with,
Not knowing what we did; but too ashamed
Not to undo ourselves what we had done.

*Capt.* No matter, nor by whosesoever hands,
Provided done. Come; we will bring him forth
Out of that stony darkness here abroad,
Where air and sunshine sooner shall disperse
The sleepy fume which they have drugg'd him with.

(*They enter the tower, and thence bring out* SEGISMUND *asleep on a pallet, and set him in the middle of the stage.*)

*Capt.* Still, still so dead asleep, the very noise
And motion that we make in carrying him
Stirs not a leaf in all the living tree.

*Soldiers.*

If living—But if by some inward blow
For ever and irrevocably fell'd
By what strikes deeper to the root than sleep?

*Soldiers.*

— He's dead! He's dead! They've killed him—
— No—he breathes—
And the heart beats—and now he breathes again
Deeply, as one about to shake away
The load of sleep.

*Capt.* Come, let us all kneel round,
And with a blast of warlike instruments,
And acclamation of all loyal hearts,
Rouse and restore him to his royal right,
From which no royal wrong shall drive him more.

(*They all kneel round his bed: trumpets, drums, &c.*)

*Soldiers.* Segismund! Segismund! Prince Segismund!
King Segismund! Down with Basilio!
Down with Astolfo! Segismund our King! &c.

*Soldier* 1. He stares upon us wildly. He cannot speak.
— 2. I said so—driv'n him mad.
— 3. Speak to him, Captain.

*Capt.* Oh Royal Segismund, our Prince and King,
Look on us—listen to us—answer us,
Your faithful soldiery and subjects, now
About you kneeling, but on fire to rise
And cleave a passage through your enemies,
Until we seat you on your lawful throne.
For though your father, King Basilio,
Now King of Poland, jealous of the stars
That prophesy his setting with your rise,
Here holds you ignominiously eclipsed,
And would Astolfo, Duke of Muscovy,
Mount to the throne of Poland after him;
So will not we, your loyal soldiery
And subjects; neither those of us now first

Apprised of your existence and your right:
Nor those that hitherto deluded by
Allegiance false, their vizors now fling down,
And craving pardon on their knees with us
For that unconscious disloyalty,
Offer with us the service of their blood;
Not only we and they; but at our heels
The heart, if not the bulk, of Poland follows
To join their voices and their arms with ours,
In vindicating with our lives our own
Prince Segismund to Poland and her throne.

*Soldiers.* {Segismund, Segismund, Prince Segismund!
{Our own King Segismund, &c.

(*They all rise.*)

*Seg.* Again? So soon?—What, not yet done with me?
The sun is little higher up, I think,
Than when I last lay down,
To bury in the depth of your own sea
You that infest its shallows.

*Capt.* Sir!

*Seg.* And now,
Not in a palace, not in the fine clothes
We all were in; but here, in the old place,
And in our old accoutrement—
Only your vizors off, and lips unlockt
To mock me with that idle title—

*Capt.* Nay,
Indeed no idle title, but your own,
Then, now, and now for ever. For, behold,
Ev'n as I speak, the mountain passes fill
And bristle with the advancing soldiery
That glitters in your rising glory, sir;
And, at our signal, echo to our cry,

"Segismund, King of Poland!" &c. (*Shouts, trumpets, &c.*)

*Seg.* Oh, how cheap
The muster of a countless host of shadows,
As impotent to do with as to keep!
All this they said before—to softer music.

*Capt.* Soft music, sir, to what indeed were shadows,
That, following the sunshine of a Court,
Shall back be brought with it—if shadows still,
Yet to substantial reckoning.

*Seg.* They shall?
The white-hair'd and white-wanded chamberlain,
So busy with his wand too—the old King
That I was somewhat hard on—he had been
Hard upon me—and the fine feather'd Prince
Who crow'd so loud—my cousin,—and another,
Another cousin, we will not bear hard on—
And—But Clotaldo?

*Capt.* Fled, my Lord, but close
Pursued; and then—

*Seg.* Then, as he fled before,
And after he had sworn it on his knees,
Came back to take me—where I am!—No more,
No more of this! Away with you! Begone!
Whether but visions of ambitious night
That morning ought to scatter, or grown out
Of night's proportions you invade the day
To scare me from my little wits yet left,
Begone! I know I must be near awake,
Knowing I dream; or, if not at my voice,
Then vanish at the clapping of my hands,
Or take this foolish fellow for your sport:
Dressing me up in visionary glories,
Which the first air of waking consciousness

Scatters as fast as from the almander*—
That, waking one fine morning in full flower,
One rougher insurrection of the breeze
Of all her sudden honour disadorns
To the last blossom, and she stands again
The winter-naked scare-crow that she was!

*Capt.* I know not what to do, nor what to say,
With all this dreaming; I begin to doubt
They have driv'n him mad indeed, and he and we
Are lost together.

*A Soldier* (*to Captain*). Stay, stay; I remember—
Hark in your ear a moment. (*Whispers.*)

*Capt.* So—so—so?—
Oh, now indeed I do not wonder, sir,
Your senses dazzle under practices
Which treason, shrinking from its own device,
Would now persuade you only was a dream;
But waking was as absolute as this
You wake in now, as some who saw you then,
Prince as you were and are, can testify:
Not only saw, but under false allegiance
Laid hands upon—

*Soldier* 1. I, to my shame!

*Soldier* 2. And I!

*Capt.* Who, to wipe out that shame, have been the first
To stir and lead us—Hark! (*Shouts, trumpets, &c.*)

*A Soldier.* Our forces, sir,
Challenging King Basilio's, now in sight,
And bearing down upon us.

*Capt.* Sir, you hear;
A little hesitation and delay,

* Almander, or almandre, Chaucer's word for *almond-tree*, Rom. Rose, 1363.

And all is lost—your own right, and the lives
Of those who now maintain it at that cost;
With you all saved and won; without, all lost.
That former recognition of your right
Grant but a dream, if you will have it so;
Great things forecast themselves by shadows great:
Or will you have it, this like that dream too,
People, and place, and time itself, all dream—
Yet, being in't, and as the shadows come
Quicker and thicker than you can escape,
Adopt your visionary soldiery,
Who, having struck a solid chain away,
Now put an airy sword into your hand,
And harnessing you piece-meal till you stand
Amidst us all complete in glittering,
If unsubstantial, steel—

*Rosaura* (*without*). The Prince! The Prince!

*Capt.* Who calls for him?

*Sol.* The Page who spurr'd us hither,
And now, dismounted from a foaming horse—

*Enter* ROSAURA.

*Rosaura.* Where is—but where I need no further ask
Where the majestic presence, all in arms,
Mutely proclaims and vindicates himself.

*Fife.* My darling Lady-lord—

*Ros.* My own good Fife,
Keep to my side—and silence!—Oh, my Lord,
For the third time behold me here where first
You saw me, by a happy misadventure
Losing my own way here to find it out
For you to follow with these loyal men,
Adding the moment of my little cause

To yours; which, so much mightier as it is,
By a strange chance runs hand in hand with mine;
The self-same foe who now pretends your right,
Withholding mine—that, of itself alone,
I know the royal blood that runs in you
Would vindicate, regardless of your own:
The right of injured innocence; and, more,
Spite of this epicene attire, a woman's;
And of a noble stock I will not name
Till I, who brought it, have retrieved the shame.
Whom Duke Astolfo, Prince of Muscovy,
With all the solemn vows of wedlock won,
And would have wedded, as I do believe,
Had not the cry of Poland for a Prince
Call'd him from Muscovy to join the prize
Of Poland with the fair Estrella's eyes.
I, following him hither, as you saw,
Was cast upon these rocks; arrested by
Clotaldo: who, for an old debt of love
He owes my family, with all his might
Served, and had served me further, till my cause
Clash'd with his duty to his sovereign,
Which, as became a loyal subject, sir,
(And never sovereign had a loyaller,)
Was still his first. He carried me to Court,
Where, for the second time, I cross'd your path;
Where, as I watch'd my opportunity,
Suddenly broke this public passion out;
Which, drowning private into public wrong,
Yet swiftlier sweeps it to revenge along.

*Seg.* Oh God, if this be dreaming, charge it not
To burst the channel of enclosing sleep
And drown the waking reason! Not to dream

Only what dreamt shall once or twice again
Return to buzz about the sleeping brain
Till shaken off for ever—
But reassailing one so quick, so thick—
The very figure and the circumstance
Of sense-confest reality foregone
In so-call'd dream so palpably repeated,
The copy so like the original,
We know not which is which; and dream so-call'd
Itself inweaving so inextricably
Into the tissue of acknowledged truth;
The very figures that empeople it
Returning to assert themselves no phantoms
In something so much like meridian day,
And in the very place that not my worst
And veriest disenchanter shall deny
For the too well-remember'd theatre
Of my long tragedy—Strike up the drums!
If this be Truth, and all of us awake,
Indeed a famous quarrel is at stake:
If but a Vision I will see it out,
And, drive the Dream, I can but join the rout.

*Capt.* And in good time, sir, for a palpable
Touchstone of truth and rightful vengeance too,
Here is Clotaldo taken.

*Soldiers.* In with him!
In with the traitor! (*Clotaldo brought in.*)

*Seg.* Ay, Clotaldo, indeed—
Himself—in his old habit—his old self—
What! back again, Clotaldo, for a while
To swear me this for truth, and afterwards
All for a dreaming lie?

*Clo.* Awake or dreaming,

Down with that sword, and down these traitors theirs,
Drawn in rebellion 'gainst their Sovereign.
*Seg.* (*about to strike*). Traitor! Traitor yourself!—But soft—soft—soft!—
You told me, not so very long ago,
Awake or dreaming—I forget—my brain
Is not so clear about it—but I know
One test you gave me to discern between,
Which mad and dreaming people cannot master;
Or if the dreamer could, so best secure
A comfortable waking—Was't not so?—
(*To Rosaura*). Needs not your intercession now, you see,
As in the dream before—
Clotaldo, rough old nurse and tùtor too
That only traitor wert, to me if true—
Give him his sword; set him on a fresh horse;
Conduct him safely through my rebel force;
And so God speed him to his sovereign's side!
Give me your hand; and whether all awake
Or all a-dreaming, ride, Clotaldo, ride—
Dream-swift—for fear we dreams should overtake.

(*A Battle may be supposed to take place; after which*)

SCENE II. *A wooded pass near the field of battle: drums, trumpets, firing, &c. Cries of "God save Basilio! Segismund," &c. Enter* FIFE *running.*

*Fife.* God save them both, and save them all! say I!—
Oh—what hot work!—Whichever way one turns
The whistling bullet at one's ears—I've drifted
Far from my mad young—master—whom I saw
Tossing upon the very crest of battle,

Beside the Prince—God save her first of all!
With all my heart I say and pray—and so
Commend her to His keeping—bang!—bang!—bang!—
And for myself—scarce worth His thinking of—
I'll see what I can do to save myself
Behind this rock, until the storm blows over.

(*Skirmishes, shouts, firing, &c. After some time enter* KING BASILIO, ASTOLFO, *and* CLOTALDO.)

*King.* The day is lost!
*Ast.* Do not despair—the rebels—
*King.* Alas! the vanquisht only are the rebels.
*Clotaldo.* Ev'n if this battle lost us, 'tis but one
Gain'd on their side, if you not lost in it;
Another moment and too late: at once
Take horse, and to the capital, my liege,
Where in some safe and holy sanctuary
Save Poland in your person.
*Ast.* Be persuaded:
You know your son: have tasted of his temper;
At his first onset threatening unprovoked
The crime predicted for his last and worst.
How whetted now with such a taste of blood,
And thus far conquest!
*King.* Ay, and how he fought!
Oh how he fought, Astolfo; ranks of men
Falling as swathes of grass before the mower;
I could but pause to gaze at him, although,
Like the pale horseman of the Apocalypse,
Each moment brought him nearer—Yet I say,
I could but pause and gaze on him, and pray
Poland had such a warrior for her king.

*Ast.* The cry of triumph on the other side
Gains ground upon us here—there's but a moment
For you, my liege, to do, for me to speak,
Who back must to the field, and what man may,
Do, to retrieve the fortune of the day. (*Firing.*)
*Fife* (*falling forward, shot*). Oh, Lord, have mercy on me.
*King.* What a shriek—
Oh, some poor creature wounded in a cause
Perhaps not worth the loss of one poor life!—
So young too—and no soldier—
*Fife.* A poor lad,
Who choosing play at hide and seek with death,
Just hid where death just came to look for him;
For there's no place, I think, can keep him out,
Once he's his eye upon you. All grows dark—
You glitter finely too—Well—we are dreaming—
But when the bullet's off—Heav'n save the mark!
So tell my mister—mastress— (*Dies.*)
*King.* Oh God! How this poor creature's ignorance
Confounds our so-call'd wisdom! Even now
When death has stopt his lips, the wound through which
His soul went out, still with its bloody tongue
Preaching how vain our struggle against fate!
(*Voices within*). After them! After them! This way!
This way!
The day is ours—Down with Basilio, &c.
*Ast.* Fly, sir—
*King.* And slave-like flying not out-ride
The fate which better like a King abide!

*Enter* SEGISMUND, ROSAURA, SOLDIERS, *&c.*

*Segismund.* Where is the King?
*King* (*prostrating himself*). Behold him,—by this late

Anticipation of resistless fate,
Thus underneath your feet his golden crown,
And the white head that wears it, laying down,
His fond resistance hope to expiate.
*Segismund.* Princes and warriors of Poland—you
That stare on this unnatural sight aghast,
Listen to one who, Heav'n-inspired to do
What in its secret wisdom Heav'n forecast,
By that same Heav'n instructed prophet-wise
To justify the present in the past.
What in the sapphire volume of the skies
Is writ by God's own finger misleads none,
But him whose vain and misinstructed eyes,
They mock with misinterpretation,
Or who, mistaking what he rightly read,
Ill commentary makes, or misapplies
Thinking to shirk or thwart it. Which has done
The wisdom of this venerable head;
Who, well provided with the secret key
To that gold alphabet, himself made me,
Himself, I say, the savage he fore-read
Fate somehow should be charged with; nipp'd the growth
Of better nature in constraint and sloth,
That only bring to bear the seed of wrong,
And turn'd the stream to fury whose out-burst
Had kept his lawful channel uncoerced,
And fertilized the land he flow'd along.
Then like to some unskilful duellist,
Who having over-reach'd himself pushing too hard
His foe, or but a moment off his guard—
What odds, when Fate is one's antagonist!—
Nay, more, this royal father, self-dismay'd
At having Fate against himself array'd,

Upon himself the very sword he knew
Should wound him, down upon his bosom drew,
That might well handled, well have wrought; or, kept
Undrawn, have harmless in the scabbard slept.
But Fate shall not by human force be broke,
Nor foil'd by human feint; the Secret learn'd
Against the scholar by that master turn'd
Who to himself reserves the master-stroke.
Witness whereof this venerable Age,
Thrice crown'd as Sire, and Sovereign, and Sage,
Down to the very dust dishonour'd by
The very means he tempted to defy
The irresistible. And shall not I,
Till now the mere dumb instrument that wrought
The battle Fate has with my father fought,
Now the mere mouth-piece of its victory—
Oh, shall not I, the champion's sword laid down,
Be yet more shamed to wear the teacher's gown,
And, blushing at the part I had to play,
Down where that honour'd head I was to lay
By this more just submission of my own,
The treason Fate has forced on me atone?

*King.* Oh, Segismund, in whom I see indeed,
Out of the ashes of my self-extinction
A better self revive; if not beneath
Your feet, beneath your better wisdom bow'd,
The Sovereignty of Poland I resign,
With this its golden symbol; which if thus
Saved with its silver head inviolate,
Shall nevermore be subject to decline;
But when the head that it alights on now
Falls honour'd by the very foe that must,
As all things mortal, lay it in the dust,

Shall star-like shift to his successor's brow.
*Shouts, trumpets, &c.* God save King Segismund!
*Seg.* For what remains—
As for my own, so for my people's peace,
Astolfo's and Estrella's plighted hands
I disunite, and taking hers to mine,
His to one yet more dearly his resign.
*Shouts, &c.* God save Estrella, Queen of Poland!
*Seg.* (*to Clotaldo*). You
That with unflinching duty to your King,
Till countermanded by the mightier Power,
Have held your Prince a captive in the tower,
Henceforth as strictly guard him on the throne,
No less my people's keeper than my own*.

You stare upon me all, amazed to hear
The word of civil justice from such lips
As never yet seem'd tuned to such discourse.
But listen—In that same enchanted tower,
Not long ago I learn'd it from a dream
Expounded by this ancient prophet here;

* In Calderon's drama, the Soldier who liberates Segismund meets with even worse recompence than in the version below. I suppose some such saving clause against prosperous treason was necessary in the days of Philip IV., if not later.

*Capt.* And what for him, my liege, who made you free
To honour him who held you prisoner?
*Seg.* By such self-proclamation self-betrayed
Less to your Prince's service or your King's
Loyal, than to the recompence it brings;
The tower he leaves I make you keeper of
For life—and, mark you, not to leave alive;
For treason may, but not the traitor, thrive.

And which he told me, should it come again,
How I should bear myself beneath it; not
As then with angry passion all on fire,
Arguing and making a distemper'd soul;
But ev'n with justice, mercy, self-control,
As if the dream I walk'd in were no dream,
And conscience one day to account for it.
A dream it was in which I thought myself,
And you that hail'd me now then hail'd me King,
In a brave palace that was all my own,
Within, and all without it, mine; until,
Drunk with excess of majesty and pride,
Methought I tower'd so high and swell'd so wide,
That of myself I burst the glittering bubble,
That my ambition had about me blown,
And all again was darkness. Such a dream
As this in which I may be walking now;
Dispensing solemn justice to you shadows,
Who make believe to listen; but anon,
With all your glittering arms and equipage,
King, princes, captains, warriors, plume and steel,
Ay, ev'n with all your airy theatre,
May flit into the air you seem to rend
With acclamation, leaving me to wake
In the dark tower; or dreaming that I wake
From this that waking is; or this and that
Both waking or both dreaming; such a doubt
Confounds and clouds our mortal life about.
And, whether wake or dreaming; this I know,
How dream-wise human glories come and go;
Whose momentary tenure not to break,
Walking as one who knows he soon may wake
So fairly carry the full cup, so well

Disorder'd insolence and passion quell,
That there be nothing after to upbraid
Dreamer or doer in the part he play'd,
Whether To-morrow's dawn shall break the spell,
Or the Last Trumpet of the eternal Day,
When Dreaming with the Night shall pass away.

[*Exeunt.*

THE

# DOWNFALL AND DEATH

OF

# KING ŒDIPUS

## A Drama in Two Parts

CHIEFLY TAKEN FROM THE

ŒDIPUS TYRANNUS AND COLONEUS OF SOPHOCLES.

*To Charles Eliot Norton.*

My dear Norton,

Some while ago you asked me to complete a version of the Œdipus Tyrannus and Coloneus of Sophocles, which had been lying by me some years. Here they are at last, the two Tragedies united into one Drama under the ponderous alliteration which figures on the Title-page; for which, however, I could hit on no so comprehensive a substitute. If you can, pray do so. There also, you see that my Drama professes to be neither a Translation, nor a Paraphrase of Sophocles, but "chiefly taken" from him: I need scarcely add, only intended for those who do not read the Greek. As you, however, to whom I send it, are a Scholar, who not only knows, but reveres the original, I shall try to excuse some of the liberties which I have taken with it. For my very free treatment of what I have retained you are already sufficiently prepared; not so, perhaps, for the much I have omitted: still less for one audacious substitution of my own work for that of Sophocles in what I may call the Second Act in the Second Part of my Play.

Well, then, to begin with the more venial sins of omission. You will see that I have dispensed with all (including what I believe is called the *Kommos*) which follows the narration of the catastrophe as related by the several witnesses; as I think is the case in some of the Tragedies of Euripides. What Professor Paley says of the Kommos which terminates

the Persæ of Æschylus must, I think, be true of all: that, whatever effect the vehement recitation might add to it, the Dialogue is secondary to the Spectacle—by which I understand him to mean those outward signs of woe which are implied in the name. Even as I venture to believe—proh Scholasticus!—that in most of the Lyric Chorus (unless in the case of Æschylus) the words are secondary to the Lyre: are; in fact, a kind of better *Libretto* for the Music.

However this may be with Ode or Kommos, I think no English reader will care to have the horror of the catastrophe in the first Play increased, even to his Mind's eye, by the exhibition of the poor self-blinded King staggering into the public street, whither his two daughters have been summoned to weep, and be wept over by him. In the original, you know, the spectacle he presents is much more revolting—a spectacle indeed of royal degradation surely worse than any which Aristophanes satirised in Euripides. And is not the catastrophe when told of as being accomplished within doors, more terrible, though less horrible, than when exhibited without? And, on the other hand, does not a reader find the impression left on him by the grand catastrophe of the Coloneus dissipated rather than enhanced by the Lamentations which follow, and conclude the Tragedy?

Thus far I do not think you will much differ from me: but what will you say to the disappearance of two principal Characters from the Dramatis Personæ—that of Creon from the first Play, and that of Ismene from the second? Œdipus, you know, has involved Creon in the same groundless charge of Treason which he brings against Teiresias; and, after much and violent altercation with the Prophet, turns with yet more vindictive fury upon the Prince, who comes to vindicate himself from the charge. From all which little

results except to show that the Creon of this Play (the Tyrannus) proves himself by his temperate self-defence, and subsequent forbearance toward his accuser, very unlike the Creon of the two after Tragedies, which Goethe thought should be regarded as parts of a connected Trilogy—a theory which is not favoured either by this dissimilarity of character in the several Tragedies, or by the dates usually assigned to the composition of each; the Antigone being reputed as among the earlier, and the Coloneus, as tradition tells, the very last of all the Poet's works.

As for Ismene—her cautious refusal to help in burying her revolted brother may not be inconsistent with her singular exploit of riding alone to Athens to acquaint her banished father with what is plotting against him in Thebes. But her arrival brings with it more of paternal and filial effusion than comes within the compass of my Play. So I pretend that some loyal Theban—she, if you please, on her Sicilian filly—had told all that was to be told previously to the opening of the Play: and thus Ismene "disappears from my Playbill" altogether. And Œdipus seems to me to present us a no less pathetic figure when accompanied only by the one daughter who is traditionally associated with him as the type of filial, as afterward of sisterly, devotion.

The disappearance of the two sisters along with that Kommos from the first Play helps to connect it with the second in point of Time, without, I think, diminishing the interest of either. In the Tyrannus, you know, Œdipus appears as a man little, if at all, beyond the prime of life. He came quite young, he tells us, to Thebes; his unlucky marriage, by which the State thought to confirm his other claims to the throne, would, for the same reasons, be not long delayed; those two daughters of his are scarce in their teens—certainly not marriageable—when brought in to him

just before his expulsion; which, as the life of Thebes depended on it, must have followed immediately on his conviction. Creon, at any rate, must have been, by his ill-starr'd relation with Œdipus, considerably the older of the two; and he, we see, is capable of very active service both in the Coloneus and Antigone; and certainly if Œdipus became an old man between the time of his leaving Thebes, and that of his arrival at Athens, Antigone, who figures along with him in both the original Tragedies, may, on her subsequent return to Thebes, have been a suitable bride in point of years to Creon's son Hæmon, but scarcely such as he would have been so much enamoured of as to sacrifice himself at her side.

Nevertheless, in the original Coloneus, Œdipus has become an old—I think, a very old man. Our own Theatre—our own Shakespeare—has "jumped the life" of his people over as wide an interval in the compass of a single Play as Sophocles has done in two several Tragedies: but, especially if considering them as parts of a Trilogy, one cannot help asking one's self *where*, in all the little world of Greece, Œdipus could have found Space to wander in all the Time.

Perhaps, however, so ran the Legend; or Sophocles considered that, as usual, I think, in ancient Tragedy—the "Pity of it" was increased by adding the weight of old age to blindness and calamity. I do not question that: but is it so with the grandeur of his præternatural "taking off," if determined to a time of life when death in some way or other is inevitable?

So much for omission. And now for my capital act of treason committed against Sophocles, amounting to nothing less than the re-casting of the whole Second Act (as I call it) of the Coloneus, including Creon's bootless expedition to Athens.

I never understood, though I doubt not the Athenian audience approved, that coming of his with a considerable force (as in the original he does) unprevented—uninterrupted, and apparently unobserved, under the very walls of their City, and seizing on those who were taking refuge there. Insomuch that, when King Theseus, alarmed by the outcries of the Chorus, comes to the rescue, Antigone and Ismene have already been forced away by some of Creon's people, and Œdipus only just escapes being carried off by Creon himself.

In re-casting all this, I hope that whatever wrong I may have done Sophocles, King Theseus, at any rate, has not suffered indignity at my hands, if Creon be made to regard him of sufficient account as to apprize him before advancing to his walls; *not* with the rash design of seizing and carrying off those who are under his protection; but to prevail on them, if he can, by fair argument, to return to Thebes: Theseus standing between the two parties to hear, if not to judge, what has to be said on either side.

And on that score also I have something to say. Up to this visit of Creon's, I could never see any just ground for the rancorous hate which Œdipus entertains and exhibits toward Creon or toward his own sons, which occupies so much of the Coloneus with imprecations, that remind one of Lear's against his daughter, but without as much reason, and therefore without engaging our sympathy in his behalf. For how stands the case? Phœbus had announced that, until the murder of King Laius were avenged, Thebes would not rid herself of the Plague that was devouring her: Œdipus denounces Excommunication on the Criminal; convicts himself*; and, after putting out his own eyes, calls aloud

* Though, so far as I see, the sole surviving witness of the deed whom he has ultimately—(not immediately, as would Justice Shallow)

for Thebes to execute the sentence he had called down upon himself, whether by banishment or death. Creon, however, who is now left in charge of the City, decides, with the concurrence of Œdipus' two sons, that banishment will be sufficient accomplishment of the Oracle; and Œdipus is accordingly banished. He soon indeed repents of his rash self-denunciation, and prays to be restored to Thebes: but how could that be until Apollo, by Oracle or Augury, should sanction his return, without danger of bringing back the Plague which he took away with him?

And when the Oracle at last declares that Thebes can only secure herself from her enemies by repossessing herself of her old King, it is on the strange condition that she is to keep her treasure, whether alive or dead, upon neighbouring territory, for the very reason that he is polluted by his father's blood. Not a satisfactory arrangement for him, whatever it might be for Thebes. But for this, and for all thus far, the Gods were responsible, not Creon and the sons upon whom he fulminates his wrath.

But when Creon appears, and afterward Polynices, to persuade, if not to force him *home*, he being apprised of their ulterior intentions regarding him, we do not wonder at his blazing up against their selfish duplicity. But still it is, I think, their previous ill-usage (as he thinks it), rather than their present design upon him, which mainly supplies the fuel of his wrath.

Now, had his first expulsion been aggravated by unnecessary cruelty and insult on their part; and had they persisted in keeping him out when the Gods, under some favourable auspices, might have been supposed to license

—sent for to decide the question, had not yet arrived; or, being, as the Chorus surmises, the same who convicts Œdipus of his fatal parentage, is not interrogated at all as to his Father's murder.

his return to Thebes, polluted as he might still be with the blood which had not prevented his reigning there for so many years before: I think he would have been furnished with such reason for his Fury as would have carried our feelings along with him. And, whatever ancient Legend or Mythology might say, neither of them was very impracticable, had the Poet chosen to deal with them as I have ventured on doing with him.

While doing, as well as saying all this, I am sure you will understand that I am not pretending to improve on Sophocles, whether as a Poet or a Dramatist. As for Poetry, I pretend to very little more than representing the old Greek in sufficiently readable English verse: and whatever I have omitted, added, or altered, has been with a view to the English reader of To-day, without questioning what was fittest for an Athenian theatre more than two thousand years ago. Those great ancient Tragedians were not, any more than their audiences, nice about such consistencies and probabilities as any modern playwright would provide for, and, so far, be the better for it.

One modification of the original not even the English Scholar—I do not mean, Scholastic—would resent; namely, leaving the terrible story to develope itself no further than needs it must to be intelligible, without being descanted, dwelt, and dilated on, after the fashion of Greek Tragedy.

As I thought I should do no better with the Choruses than old Potter, I have left them, as you see, in his hands, though worthy of a better Interpreter than either of us; all of them, I say, excepting the two fragments which might otherwise be imputed to him: one at page 199 of the First Part during which Iocasta is supposed to be making her oblations at the altar before the Corinthian Herald interrupts her: secondly, at page 258 of the Second Part, by

way of giving Theseus a little while before he enters on the scene to which he has been so hastily summoned: and, lastly, the little Choral morality which ends each play. You say that good literal Prose translation would be better than Potter. So think I too in some respects; but with Potter the Lyric *Form*, so essential to the conception of Greek Tragedy, is retained, if nothing else: though some grand piece of appropriate organ music would answer the purpose much better.

What I meant for a written letter has grown to such a length—and long-windedness, I fear—that it shall even go to the printer along with the play which it prates about, and, at any rate, give you no trouble in deciphering. Pray mark down what you see amiss in both: and believe me yours, as ever, sincerely,

LITTLEGRANGE.

[FEBRUARY, 1880.]

# PART I.

# ŒDIPUS IN THEBES.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ŒDIPUS, *King of Thebes.*
IOCASTA, *his Queen.*
CREON, *her Brother.*
TEIRESIAS, *Prophet of Apollo.*
PRIEST.
HERALD FROM CORINTH.
SHEPHERD OF KING LAIUS.
CHORUS OF THEBAN ELDERS.

*The Scene is at* THEBES, *before the Palace of* KING ŒDIPUS.

# THE DOWNFALL AND DEATH OF KING ŒDIPUS.

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ŒDIPUS, PRIEST AND SUPPLIANTS *assembled before his palace-gate*, CHORUS.

*Œd.* Children of Cadmus, and as mine to me,
When all that of the plague-struck city can
With lamentation loud, and sacrifice
Beset the shrines and altars of the Gods
Through street and market, by the Temples twain
Of Pallas, and before the Tomb that shrouds
Ismenus' his prophetic ashes—why
Be you thus gathered at my palace-door,
Mute, with the Suppliant's olive-branch in hand?
Asking, or deprecating, what? which I,
Not satisfied from other lips to learn,
Myself am come to hear it from your own.
You, whose grave aspect and investiture
Announce the chosen oracle of all,
Tell me the purport: I am here, you see,
As King, and Father of his people too,

To listen and what in me lies to do;
For surely mine were but a heart of stone
Not to be moved by such an embassy,
Nor feel my people's sorrows as my own.
*Priest.* O Œdipus, our Father, and our King!
Of what a mingled company you see
This Supplication gather'd at your door;
Ev'n from the child who scarce has learn'd to creep,
Down to old age that little further can,
With all the strength of life that breathes between.
You know how all the shatter'd city lies
Reeling a-wreck, and cannot right herself
Under the tempest of this pestilence,
That nips the fruitful growth within the bud,
Strangles the struggling blossom in the womb,
With sudden death infects the living man,
Until the realm of Cadmus wastes, and Thebes
With her depopulation Hades feeds.
Therefore, myself and this mute company
In supplication at your altar sit,
Looking to you for succour; looking not
As to a God, but to the Man of men,
Most like the God in man's extremity:
Who, coming here a stranger to the land,
Didst overcome the Witch who with her song
Seduced, and slew the wisest and the best;
For which all but divine deliverance Thebes
Call'd the strange man who saved her to the throne
Left void by her hereditary king.
And now the kingdom looks to you once more—
To you, the Master of the master-mind,
To save her in a worse extremity:
When men, not one by one, but troop by troop,

Fall by a plague more deadly than the Sphinx,
Till Thebes herself is left to foreign arms
Assailable—for what are wall and tower,
Divinely built and founded as they be,
Without the rampart of the man within?—
And let not what of Cadmus yet survives
From this time forth regard you as the man
Who saved them once, by worse to perish now.

*Œd.* Alas, my children! telling me of that
My people groans with, knowing not yourselves
How more than any man among you, I,
Who bear the accumulated woes of all;
So that you find me, coming when you may,
Restlessly all day pacing up and down,
Tossing all night upon a sleepless bed,
Endeavouring all that of myself I can,
And all of Heaven implore—thus far in vain.
But if your King have seem'd to pause awhile,
'Tis that I wait the issue of one hope,
Which, if accomplish'd, will accomplish all.
Creon, my brother, and my second self
Beside the throne I sit on, to the shrine
Of Delphian Phœbus, man's assured appeal
In all his exigence, I have despatch'd:
And long before you gather'd at my door
Within my soul was fretting, lest To-day
That should have lighted him from Delphi back
Pass over into night, and bring him not.
But come he must, and will; and when he comes,
Do I not all, so far as man may do,
To follow where the God shall point the way,
Denounce me traitor to the State I saved
And to the people who proclaimed me King.

*Cho.* Your words are as a breath from Delphi, King,
Prophetic of itself; for even now
Fore-running Rumour buzzes in our ear
That he whose coming all await is here.
*Œd.* And as before the advent of a God,
The moving multitude divides—O Phœbus!
Be but the word he carries back to me
Auspicious as well-timed!
*Chorus.* And shall no less;
For look! the laurel wreath about his brow
Can but announce the herald of Success.

ŒDIPUS, CREON, CHORUS.

*Œd.* Son of Menœceus! Brother! Brother-king!—
Oh, let impatience for the word you bring
Excuse brief welcome to the messenger!
Be but the word as welcome!—
*Cre.* As it shall,
Have you your ancient cunning to divine
The darker word in which the God of Light
Enshrines his answer.
*Œd.* Speak! for till I hear,
I know not whether most to hope or fear.
*Cre.* Am I to speak before the people here,
Or to yourself within?
*Œd.* Here, before all,
Whose common cause it is.
*Cre.* To all then thus:
When Delphi reach'd, and at the sacred shrine
Lustration, sacrifice, and offering made,
I put the question I was charged withal,
The Prophetess of the three-footed throne,
Conceiving with the vapour of the God

Which wrapt her, rising from Earth's centre, round,
At length convulsed to sudden answer broke:
"O SEVEN-GATED CITY, BY THE LYRE
COMPACT, AND PEOPLED FROM A DRAGON SIRE!
THEBES FEEDS THE PLAGUE THAT SLAYS HER NOURISHING
WITHIN HER WALLS THE SLAYER OF HER KING."

*Œd.* The slayer of her King? What king?

*Cre.* None else
I know than Laius, son of Labdacus,
Who occupied the throne before you came;
That much of Oracle, methinks, is plain.

*Œd.* A story rises on me from the past.
Laius, the son of Labdacus—of whom
I know indeed, but him I never saw.

*Cre.* No; he was slain before you set your foot
Over the country's threshold.

*Œd.* Slain! By whom?

*Cre.* That to divine were to interpret all
That Œdipus himself is call'd to answer.
Thus much is all we know,
The King was murder'd by some roving band
Of outlaws, who waylaid him on his road
To that same Delphi, whither he had gone
On some such sacred mission as myself.

*Œd.* Yet of those roving outlaws, one at least
Yet breathes among us in the heart of Thebes.

*Cre.* So saith the Oracle.

*Œd.* In the midst of all
The citizens and subjects of the King
He slew?

*Cre.* So saith the Oracle.

*Œd.* But hold!
The story of this treason—all, you say,

Now known of it, how first made known in Thebes?
*Cre.* By the one man of the King's retinue,
Who having 'scaped the fate which took the rest,
As if the assassin's foot were at his heels,
Half dead with fear, just reach'd the city gates
With breath to tell the story.
*Œd.* And breathes still
To tell it once again?
*Cre.* I know not that:
For having told it, the bewilder'd man,
As fast as hither he had fled, fled hence,
Where, if the assassin's foot not on him then,
His eye, the God declares, were on him now—
So fled he to his native field again
Among his flocks and fellow-husbandmen.
*Œd.* And thus the single witness you let slip,
Whose eye might ev'n have singled out the man,
As him the man's!—Oh, had I but been by,
I would have driv'n interrogation home,
Would the bewilder'd memory so have sifted
Of each minutest grain of circumstance—
How many, accoutred how, what people like—
Now by the lapse of time and memory,
Beyond recall into oblivion pass'd!
But not to lose what yet of hope there is—
Let him be sent for, sought for, found and brought.
*Cre.* Meanwhile, default of him for whom you send,
Or of uncertain memory when he comes,
Were it not well, if still the God withhold
His revelation of the word we need,
To question it of his Interpreter?
*Œd.* Of his Interpreter?
*Cre.* Of whom so well,

As of Teiresias, the blind Seer of Thebes,
Whose years the God hath in his service counted
Beyond all reach of human memory?

*Œd.* So be it. But I marvel yet why Thebes,
Letting the witness slip, then unpursued,
Or undetected, left the criminal,
Whom the King's blood, by whomsoever spilt,
Cried out aloud to be revenged upon.

*Cre.* What might be done we did. But how detect
The roving robber, in whatever land,
Of friend or foe alike, outlaw'd of all,
Where ever prey to pounce on on the wing,
Or housed in rock or forest, save to him
Unknown, or inaccessible? Besides,
Thebes soon had other business on her hand.

*Œd.* Why, what of business to engage her more
Than to revenge the murder of her King?

*Cre.* None other than the riddle-singing Sphinx
Who, till you came to silence her, held Thebes
From thinking of the dead to save herself.

*Œd.* And leaving *this* which then you might have guess'd,
To guess at that which none of you could solve,
You have brought home a riddle on your heads
Inextricable and more fatal far!
But I, who put the riddling Witch to rest,
This fatal riddle will unravel too,
And by swift execution following
The revelation, once more save the realm,
And wipe away the impiety and shame
Of Laius' yet unexpiated death.
For were no expiation to the God,
And to the welfare of this people due,

Were't not a shame thus unrevenged so long
To leave the slaughter of so great a King—
King Laius, the son of Labdacus,
Who from his father Polydore his blood
Direct from Cadmus and Agenor drew?
Shame to myself, who, sitting on the throne
He sat on, wedded to the very Queen
Who should have borne him children, as to me
She bore them, had not an assassin's hand
Divorced them ere their wedded life bore fruit!
Therefore to this as 'twere my father's cause,
As of my people's—nay, why not my own,
Who in his death am threaten'd by the hand
Of him, whose eye now follows me about?—
With the Gods' aid do I devote myself.
And hereto let the city's Herald all
Her population summon, from my lips
To hear and help in what I shall devise:
And you, that with bow'd head and olive wand,
Have since the dawn been gather'd at my door,
Beseeching me with piteous silence, rise,
And by their altars supplicate the Gods,
And Phœbus chief of all, that he may turn
His yet half-clouded word into full light,
And with one shaft of his unerring bow
Smite dead the Plague which back into the dust
Whence Cadmus raised them lays the People low.

CHORUS.

Thou oracle of Jove, what fate
From Pytho's golden shrine
Brings to th' illustrious Theban state
Thy sweet-breathed voice divine?

My trembling heart what terror rends,
While dread suspense on thee attends,
O Delian Pæan, healing pow'r!
Daughter of golden Hope, to me,
Blest voice, what now dost thou decree,
Or in time's future hour?

Daughter of heav'n's almighty lord,
Immortal Pallas, hear!
And thou, Diana, queen ador'd,
Whose tutelary care
Protects these walls, this favour'd state,
Amidst the forum 'round whose seat
Sublime encircling pillars stand!
God of the distant-wounding bow,
Apollo, hear; avert our woe,
And save the sick'ning land!

This realm when former ills oppress,
If your propitious pow'r
In mercy crush'd the baleful pest,
Outrageous to devour;
In mercy now extend your care,
For all is misery and despair,
And vain the counsels of the wise.
No fruit, no grain to ripeness grows;
The matron feels untimely throes,
The birth abortive dies.

The Shades, as birds of rapid flight,
In quick succession go,
Quick as the flames that flash through night,
To Pluto's realms below.
Th' unpeopled town beholds the dead
Wide o'er her putrid pavements spread,
Nor graced with tear or obsequy.
The altars round a mournful band,
The wives, the hoary matrons, stand,
And heave the suppliant sigh.

With deep sighs mix'd the hallow'd strain
Bursts fervent to the skies:
Deign then, O radiant Pallas, deign
In all thy might to rise.
From this fierce pow'r, which raging round
Unarm'd inflicts the fiery wound,
Daughter of Jove, my country save;
Hence, goddess, hence the fury sweep
To Amphitrite's chambers deep,
Or the rough Euxine wave!

Doth aught the Night from ruin spare?
The Morning's sickly ray,
Pregnant with death, inflames the air,
And gives disease its prey.
Father of gods, whose matchless force
Wings the red lightning's vengeful course,
With all thy thunders crush this foe!
Potent to aid, Lycéan king,
Thy shafts secure of conquest wing,
And bend thy golden bow!

Thy beams around, Diana, throw,
And pierce this gloom of night,
As on Lycæum's moss-clad brow
Thou pour'st thy silver light!
Thy nymphs, O Theban Bacchus, lead,
The golden mitre round thy head,
Grief-soothing god of wine and joy;
Wave thy bright torch, and with its flame
This god, to gods an odious name,
This lurid Pest destroy!

ŒDIPUS, CHORUS.

*Œd.* You came to me for counsel; hearken then,
And do as well as hearken, like myself

Following the pointed finger of the God
Which thus far leads us, all may yet be well.
I, Œdipus, albeit no Theban born,
By Thebes herself enthroned her sovereign King,
Thus to the citizens of Thebes proclaim;
That whosoever of them knows by whom
King Laius, son of Labdacus, was slain,
Forthwith let him disclose it undismay'd;
Yea, though the criminal himself he were,
Let not the dread of deadly consequence
Revolt him from confession of the crime;
For he shall suffer nothing worse than this,
Instant departure from the city, but
Uninjured, uninsulted, unpursued;
For though feloniously a King he slew
Yet haply as a stranger unaware
That king was Laius; and thus the crime
Half-clear'd of treason, half absolved by time.
Nor, on the other hand, if any knows
Another guilty, let him not for love,
Or fear, or whatsoever else regard,
Flinch from a revelation that shall win
More from myself than aught he fears to lose—
Nay, as a second saviour of the State
Shall after me be call'd; and who should not
Save a whole people at the cost of one?
But *Him*—that one—who would not at the cost
Of self-confession save himself and all—
Him—were he nearest to my heart and hearth—
Nearest and dearest—thus do I denounce;
That from the very moment that he stands,
By whatsoever, or by whom, reveal'd,
No man shall him bespeak, at home, abroad,

Sit with at table, nor by altar stand,
But, as the very Pestilence he were
Incarnate which this people now devours,
Him slay at once, or hoot and hunt him forth,
With execration from the city walls.
But if, in spite of promise or of threat,
The man who did, or knows who did, this deed,
Still hold it in his bosom unreveal'd—
That man—and he is here among us now—
Man's vengeance may escape when he forswears
Participation in the crime, but not
The Gods', himself involving in the Curse
Which, with myself and every man in Thebes,
He shall denounce upon the criminal,
The Gods invoking to withhold from him
That issue of the earth by which he lives,
That issue of the womb by which himself
Lives after him; that in the deadly curse
By which his fellows perish he and his
May perish, or, if worse there be, by worse!

*Cho.* Beside Apollo's altar standing here,
That oath I swear, that neither I myself
Nor did myself, nor know who did this deed:
And in the curse I join on him who did,
Or, knowing him who did, will not reveal.

*Œd.* 'Tis well: and, all the city's seven gates closed,
Thus solemnly shall every man in Thebes
Before the altars of his country swear.

*Cho.* Well have you done, O Master, in so far
As human hand and wit may reach; and lo!
The sacred Seer of Thebes, Teiresias,
To whom, next to the God himself, we look
For Heaven's assistance, at your summons comes,

In his prophetic raiment, staff in hand,
Approaching, gravely guided as his wont,
But with a step, methinks, unwonted slow.

ŒDIPUS, TEIRESIAS, CHORUS.

Teiresias, Minister and Seer of God,
Who, blind to all that others see without,
See that within to which all else are blind;
Sequester'd as you are with Deity,
You know, what others only know too well,
The mortal sickness that confounds us all;
But you alone can tell the remedy.
For since the God whose Minister you are
Bids us, if Thebes would be herself again,
Revenge the murder of King Laius
By retribution on the murderer,
Who undetected walks among us now;
Unless by you, Teiresias, to whose lips,
As Phœbus his Interpreter we cling,
To catch the single word that he withholds,
And without which what he reveals is vain—
Therefore to you, Teiresias, you alone,
Do look this people and their Ruler—look,
Imploring you, by that same inward light
Which sees, to name the man who lurks unseen,
And whose live presence is the death of all.

*Tei.* Alas! how worse than vain to be well arm'd
When the man's weapon turns upon himself!

*Œd.* I know not upon whom that arrow lights.

*Tei.* If not on him that summon'd, then on him
Who, summon'd, came. There is one remedy;
Let those who hither led me lead me hence.

*Œd.* Before the single word—which you alone

Can speak—be spoken? How is this, Teiresias,
That to your King on such a summons come,
You come so much distemper'd?

*Tei.* For the King,
With all his wisdom, knows not what he asks.

*Œd.* And therefore asks that he may know from you,
Seeing the God hath folded up his word
From human eyesight.

*Tei.* Why should I reveal
What He I serve has chosen to conceal?

*Œd.* Is't not your office to interpret that
To man which he for man vouchsafes from Heaven?

*Tei.* What Fate hath fix'd to come to pass come will,
Whether reveal'd or not.

*Œd.* I know it must;
But Fate may cancel Fate, foretelling that
Which, unpredicted, else would come to pass.

*Tei.* Yet none the less I tell you, Œdipus,
That you, though wise, not knowing what you ask,
I, knowing, shall not answer.

*Œd.* You will not!
Inexorable to the people's cries—
Plague-pitiless, disloyal to your King—

*Tei.* Oh! you forsooth were taunting me but now
With *my* distemper'd humour—

*Œd.* Who would not,
When but a word, which you pretend to know,
Would save a people?

*Tei.* One of them at least
It would not.

*Œd.* Oh, scarce any man, methinks,
But would himself, though guiltless, sacrifice,
If that would ransom all.

*Tei.* Yet one, you see,
Obdurate as myself—
*Œd.* You have not heard, perchance, Teiresias,
(Unless from that prophetic voice within,)
How through the city, by my herald's voice,
With excommunication, death, or banishment,
I have denounced, not him alone who did,
But him who, knowing who, will not reveal?
*Tei.* I hear it now.
*Œd.* And are inflexible
To Fear as Pity?
*Tei.* It might be, to Fear
Inflexible *by* Pity; else, why fear
Invulnerable as I am in Truth,
And by the God I serve inviolate?
*Œd.* Is not your King a Minister of Zeus,
As you of Phœbus, and the King of Thebes
Not more to be insulted or defied
Than any Priest or Augur in his realm?
*Tei.* Implore, denounce, and threaten as you may,
What unreveal'd I would, I will not say.
*Œd.* You will not! Mark then how, default of your
Interpretation, I interpret you:
Either not knowing what you feign to know,
You lock your tongue in baffled ignorance;
Or, knowing that which you will not reveal,
I do suspect—Suspect! why, stand you not
Self-accused, self-convicted, and by me
Denounced as he, that knowing him who did,
Will not reveal—nay, might yourself have done
The deed that you with some accomplice plann'd,
Could those blind eyes have aim'd the murderous hand?
*Tei.* You say so! Now then, listen in your turn

To that one word which, as it leaves my lips,
By your own Curse upon the Criminal
Denounced, should be your last in Thebes to hear.
For by the unerring insight of the God
You question, Zeus his delegate though you be
Who lay this Theban people under curse
Of revelation of the murderer
Whose undiscover'd presence eats away
The people's life—I tell you—You are he!

*Cho.* Forbear, old man, forbear! And you, my King,
Heed not the passion of provoked old age.

*Œd.* And thus, in your blind passion of revenge,
You think to 'scape contempt or punishment
By tossing accusation back on me
Under Apollo's mantle.

*Tei.* Ay, and more,
Dared you but listen.

*Cho.* Peace, O peace, old man!

*Œd.* Nay, let him shoot his poison'd arrows out;
They fall far short of me.

*Tei.* Not mine, but those
Which Fate had fill'd my Master's quiver with,
And you have drawn upon yourself.

*Œd.* Your Master's?
Your Master's; but assuredly not His
To whom you point, albeit you see him not,
In his meridian dazzling overhead,
Who is the God of Truth as well as Light,
And knows as I within myself must know
If Memory be not false as Augury,
The words you put into his lips a Lie!
Not He, but Self—Self only—in revenge
Of self-convicted ignorance—Self alone,

Or with some self whom Self would profit by—
As were it—Creon, say—smooth, subtle Creon,
Moving by rule and weighing every word
As in the scales of Justice—but of whom
Whispers of late have reach'd me—Creon, ha!
Methinks I scent another Master here!
Who, wearied of but secondary power
Under an alien King, and would belike
Exalt his Prophet for good service done
Higher than ever by my throne he stood—
And, now I think on't, bade me send for you
Under the mask of Phœbus—
*Cho.* Oh, forbear—
Forbear, in turn, my lord and master!
*Tei.* Nay,
Let him, in turn, his poison'd arrows, *not*
From Phœbus' quiver, shoot, but to recoil
When his mad Passion having pass'd—
*Œd.* O vain
Prerogative of human majesty,
That one poor mortal from his fellows takes,
And, with false pomp and honour dressing up,
Lifts idol-like to what men call a Throne,
For all below to worship and assail!
That even the power which unsolicited
By aught but salutary service done
The men of Thebes committed to my hands,
Some, restless under just authority,
Or jealous of not wielding it themselves,
Ev'n with the altar and the priest collude,
And tamper with, to ruin or to seize!
Prophet and Seer forsooth and Soothsayer!
Why, when the singing Witch contrived the noose

Which strangled all who tried and none could loose,
Where was the Prophet of Apollo then?
'Twas not for one who poring purblind down
Over the reeking entrail of the beast,
Nor gaping to the wandering bird in air,
Nor in the empty silence of his soul
Feigning a voice of God inaudible,
Not he, nor any of his tribe—but I—
I, Œdipus, a stranger in the land,
And uninspired by all but mother-wit,
Silenced and slew the monster against whom
Divine and human cunning strove in vain.
And now again when tried, and foil'd again,
This Prophet—whether to revenge the past,
And to prevent discomfiture to come,
Or by some traitor aiming at my throne
Suborn'd to stand a greater at his side
Than peradventure e'er he stood at mine,
Would drag me to destruction! But beware!
Beware lest, blind and agèd as you are,
Wrapt in supposititious sanctity,
You, and whoever he that leagues with you,
Meet a worse doom than you for me prepare.

*Tei.* Quick to your vengeance, then; for this same day
That under Phœbus' fiery rein flies fast
Over the field of heaven, shall be the last
That you shall play the tyrant in.

*Œd.* O Thebes,
You never called me Tyrant, from the day
Since first I saved you!

*Tei.* And shall save again;
As then by coming, by departing now.
Enough: before the day that judges both

Decide between us, let them lead me home.

*Œd.* Ay, lead him hence—home—Hades—anywhere!
Blind in his inward as his outward eye.

*Tei.* Poor man! that in your inward vision blind,
Know not, as I, that ere this day go down,
By your own hand yourself shall be consign'd
To deeper night than now you taunt me with;
When, not the King and Prophet that you were,
But a detested outcast of the land,
With other eyes and hands you feel your way
To wander through the world, begging the bread
Of execration from the stranger's hand
Denied you here, and thrust from door to door,
As though yourself the Plague you brought from Thebes;
A wretch, self-branded with the double curse
Of such unheard, unnatural infamy,
As shall confound a son in the embrace
Of her who bore him to the sire he slew!

CHORUS.

*Strophe* 1.

All yet is dark. What wretch abhorr'd,
Grasping with blood-stain'd hand his ruthless sword,
From Delphi's high rock-seated shrine
Declares the voice divine
The author of this horrid deed?
Now let him wing his swiftest speed;
The son of Jove upon him flies,
Arm'd with the flames and lightnings of the skies:
Dreadful, resistless in their force
The Fates attend his course.

*Antistrophe* 1.

The oracle divinely bright
To drag the latent murderer into light

Shone forth, Parnassus, from thy brow
White with eternal snow:
For, like a bull, to secret shades,
To rocks, to caves, to sylvan glades,
Far from the Pythian prophecies
Mournful the solitary wanderer flies:
In vain: they hover round his head,
And ceaseless terrors spread.

*Strophe* 2.

Dreadful, dreadful things to hear
Utters the prophetic Seer.
Him doth truth, doth falsehood guide?
Fear and hope my soul divide;
Painful suspense! The present and the past
Darkening clouds alike o'ercast.
Was wrong by Laius done of old,
That made the son of Polybus his foe?
Such in no record is enroll'd;
Nought at this hour of proof I know,
Decreeing as the Seer decreed,
To charge on Œdipus the secret deed.

*Antistrophe* 2.

Jove, high ruler of the skies,
And the Pythian god are wise;
They the deeds of mortals know,
All whate'er is done below:
Of knowledge doth the Seer a brighter ray,
Than illumines me, display?
Some deeper drink of wisdom's spring;
But proofs, that flash conviction I demand.
The Sphinx display'd her dreadful wing,
His wisdom saved the sinking land;
Then let my grateful soul disdain
To rank the hero with the murderer's train.

IOCASTA, CHORUS, *then* ŒDIPUS.

*Ioc.* A noise has reach'd me through the palace-wall
Of words between Teiresias and the King,
In which my brother's name was all misused.
You who were here, and heard, can tell me all.
*Cho.* Words there have been indeed on either side,
By provocation into passion blown,
Which after-thought as likely will disown.
*Ioc.* But to what purport?
*Cho.* I would not repeat
What those who utter'd now may wish unsaid,
Much more, unheard. But look! the King himself
To answer for himself.
*Ioc.* As one who dreams.
In Heaven's name, husband, tell me what has fired
This wrath between you and Teiresias,
So fierce that e'en my brother Creon's name
Was scorcht withal, and in its ashes now
Still smoulders in your face?
*Œd.* That has been said
On either side that should not; but on his,
Relying on protection from his God,
Treason so foul against his King—
*Ioc.* But what?
*Œd.* Why need tell now, if, as the Prophet says
This very day shall not go down without
To Thebes, as you, revealing?—What if I—
If I, that have with banishment or death
Denounced the assassin of King Laius—
Myself am he?
*Ioc.* You! Œdipus?
*Œd.* So says

Apollo's prophet.

*Ioc.* You!—Teiresias!—You!
On what presumption, Human or Divine?

*Œd.* On His whose chariot shall not cross the sky,
But dragging me to Night along with it.

*Ioc.* Which cannot be—we know, which cannot be
Of the God's self—you of yourself more sure
Than any mortal Prophet sure of Him.

*Œd.* So might I think. But if not from the God,
From whom then, Iocasta?

*Ioc.* Only not
From Creon—Whosoever else, not he!—
My brother, and your brother, being mine!

*Œd.* Yet brother against brother, son 'gainst sire,
Such things have been between them, and shall be,
For things of less ambition than a throne.

*Ioc.* Oh, strangle such suspicion in its birth
Of one more innocent than babe unborn!
Why, had he minded empire, could he not
Have seized it for his own before you came,
And Thebes was looking for a sovereign?
Or, after-minded to unseat you King,
Would have contrived and hatch'd his priestly plot
Ere you so firmly seated on the throne,
And life with him at least so much for-spent
As makes ev'n just possession—and much more,
Unjust, of little moment unto all!

*Œd.* So be it. From the God of Light and Truth
Less likely than from him of Sleep and Dream,
Whose-ever be the Prophet.

*Ioc.* Had you not
Provoked the Prophet first?

*Œd.* As who would not,

Who either knowing would withhold the word
On which a people's whole salvation hung,
Then, taunted into malice by just wrath,
Or to collusion with some traitor leagued,
Belied his God, and me.
*Ioc.* The man is old,
And testy, and perhaps incensed by you,
Mere human passion with the lees
Of Divination mixing—
*Œd.* Be it so;
And so, methinks, I might have let it pass,
But for a parting threat, which though in wrath
And malice, like the rest it may have been,
Woke up the echo of another Word
Told me by Delphi's self, so long ago
As with its unfulfilment to have died
Almost from memory.
*Ioc.* What Oracle
Which, if the Prophet fail'd, has fail'd as well?
*Œd.* You know I am the son of Polybus,
Of Corinth King, and Merope his Queen,
And till a chance, of which you may not know,
Slight as it seem'd, but fraught with grave result,
Methought the first in Corinth after them.
One day at table, when the cup went round,
One of the company whom I, belike
Flushed with the wine and youthful insolence,
Had twitted with his meaner parentage,
Bade me beware; for, proudly as I sate
Above them all beside the royal twain
A superstition linger'd, that because
Of some ill-omen'd accident of birth
Their son should never to their throne succeed.

The word awhile sank in the flowing wine,
But when the wine went off the word was there,
And all night long kept stirring in my brain.
So that, with morning when I woke again,
Unable to endure it unsuppress'd,
I challenged King and Queen to answer me
The challenge thrown out by the nameless guest.
Indignantly they heard; denounced the man
Whoever it might be, for false or fool,
And with endearing re-assurances
Recomforted me awhile. Nevertheless,
Spite re-assurance and redoubled love,
That random word still rankled in my heart,
And I resolved on quenching all misdoubt
From the head fountain of all truth at Delphi.
Thither, without a word of whither gone,
I went, and put my question. But the God
Vouchsafed no revelation of the past,
But prophesied far worse for me to come;
That I should slay my father: then with her
Who bore me wed, and bring into the world
A race the world would loathe to look upon.
Whereat affrighted—as what man were not?—
From Corinth and from those I was to wrong
I fled—I scarce knew whither, so from them—
Fled hither; and in spite of prophecies,
All that I lost regain'd, except the bliss
Of prospering in a loving mother's eyes.

*Ioc.* And see! the father whom you were to slay,
With that Queen-mother whom you were to wed,
Lives to a ripe old age in Corinth, far
Beyond his reach who should have wrong'd them both,
Himself fast wedded and enthroned in Thebes!

*Œd.* And yet this blunted shaft of long ago,
And rusted with oblivion, had the Seer
Snatch'd from his Master's armoury To-day,
For malediction's last and master blow!

*Ioc.* Which from his Master's hand had fail'd before!
And would you listen to a woman's voice
I could requite your story, Œdipus,
With one so like as almost to be one,
Save that in mine the Sire it was who foil'd
Predestination, as in yours the Son.

*Œd.* In this dumb pause between despair and hope,
Whose voice to me more welcome than your own?

*Ioc.* When first I wedded with King Laius,
Whose murder now perplexes Thebes and you,
A Prophecy from Delphi reached his ears—
But whether from the God, or from his Priest,
I know not—but there went the Prophecy;
That he should die slain by the hand of him
Who should be born between himself and me.
Whereat, like you, affrighted, when the child
But three days born had seen the light of day,
He had him, spite of all a mother's cries,
Not slain, but left in some such desert place
As where with cold and hunger, he must die.
So, at the sacrifice of that poor life
Saving his own, he lived himself in peace,
Till slain, not as the Oracle foretold
Slain by the son himself had slain before,
But by that undetected alien hand
Which the fond Prophet pointed at in you.
Of such account are such vaticinations,
Whether from Phœbus, or his Minister;
Of which take you no heed. For, surely, what

Fate has determined, Fate shall bring to pass,
Whether by prophecy foretold or not.
*Œd.* So seems it.
*Ioc.* Nay, beyond denial *is*.
And yet you seem to hesitate as one
Who in broad daylight cannot see his way.
*Œd.* Was it not said that Laius your King
Upon some sacred errand by the road
Was set upon and murder'd?
*Ioc.* Even so;
To that same Delphi where yourself had been,
As much to be misled.
*Œd.* And whereabout?
*Ioc.* Somewhere in Phocis which his road went through;
As went the story.
*Œd.* And how long ago?
*Ioc.* Nay, just before you came to Thebes yourself
To save us from the Sphinx, and occupy
The throne left empty by my husband's death.
What makes you muse?
*Œd.* And this King Laius
About what age, and what to look upon?
*Ioc.* Lofty and large of stature, and of port
And aspect that becomes a King; his hair
Just whitening with the earliest frost of age—
*Œd.* And how accompanied?
*Ioc.* With such a train
Accompanied as may become a King
Upon a peaceful errand of his own,
And through a friendly people travelling.
*Œd.* And, as the story went, but one of those
Who, witnessing, escaped to tell the tale.
*Ioc.* Ev'n so it was.

*Œd.* And him they let depart
With half his tale untold?
*Ioc.* Nay, all he could,
Half dead with terror. Meanwhile Œdipus,
What is't that, when I thought to clear your brow
With dissipation of prophetic fear,
Darkens it more and more?
*Œd.* Is it not strange—
Strange—that your second husband, like your first,
With such a cross-related Prophecy
Threaten'd, like him should have defeated it?
*Ioc.* Strange as it is, but most assuredly.
*Œd.* O Iocasta, what if secret Fate
Avenged the God, who sometimes speaks for her,
Two thwarted utterances by one blow
On Laius and myself unprophesied?
*Ioc.* I know not what this aims at.
*Œd.* You shall hear.
When, as I told you, in my youth at Corinth,
I had resolved to cross that Prophecy
Which from the God's own lips myself had heard,
By flying those I was foredoom'd to wrong—
Nay, from the very country of my birth,
Leaving them all behind me for the stars
Alone to tell me of their whereabout,
I fled: and flying as at random on,
I came—now mark me, Iocasta, came—
Whether in Phocis, or elsewhere, I know not—
Where two main roads which lead two nations on
To Delphi, shrink into a narrow gorge;
When, coming up the narrow road, Behold!
A Herald first, and then a chariot,
In which, erect beside his charioteer,

There rode the stately semblance of a King,
And so came on, not swerving left or right,
As if the road were but for them, and I
A cur, to slink aside and let them by.
Whereat, no cur, but a King's son, enraged,
With the stout staff I carried in my hand
I smote the charioteer; on which the King
Struck me with his—for which he paid too dear
With such a fatal counter-blow from mine
As roll'd him headlong dead into the dust:
And, after him, his Herald, and all his
Who came against me one by one I slew.
Now if the royal man—for such he was—
Were—as by such consent of circumstance
I scarce dare think were not—

*Ioc.* Oh, many a King
Of a like presence, and like retinue,
Has been that road to learn the word of Fate
Which he, like you, had vainly learn'd before.

*Œd.* But one escaped, they say; and if he live—
And if maintain the tale that first he told,
That Laius, not by one, but many men,
Was in his chariot set upon and slain,
Then was it surely not King Laius
Whom single-handed, and alone, I slew.
But if he falter from that first report—

*Ioc.* How should he?

*Œd.* Whether out of present fear,
Or after, to excuse a coward flight,
One man to numbers multiply he might—

*Ioc.* He cannot—whether by device or fear,
He cannot falter from his first report—
Unless the sudden presence of his King,

And the disquiet of your looks affright him
Into the confirmation of false fear.
But meanwhile, Œdipus, come in with me,
And let not troubled Thebes new troubles see
Writ in your brows, augmenting present ill,
And Prophecy that Fate shall not fulfil.

CHORUS.

*Strophe* 1.

Fair Fortune deign with me to dwell,
My soul if holy reverence awes,
By thinking, speaking, acting well,
To bow obedient to the Laws.
From heav'n they draw their lineage high,
And tread with stately step the sky:
Their father the Olympian king;
No mixture of man's mortal mould;
Nor shall Oblivion's sable wing
In shades their active virtues fold.
In them the god is great, nor fears
The withering waste of years.

*Antistrophe* 1.

The tyrant Pride engenders. Pride
With wealth o'erfilled, with greatness vain,
Mounting with Outrage at her side,
The splendid summit if she gain,
Falls headlong from the dangerous brow,
Down dash'd to ruin's gulf below.
Not so our monarch: for of old,
His contest glorious to the state,
In her own blood the Fury roll'd:
So may the god now guide his fate!
Still be the god's protection mine,
Strong in his power divine!

*Strophe* 2.

But should some wretch, contemptuous, bold,
Brave the just gods, his hands with slaughter stain,
The vengeful pow'rs of heav'n disdain,
Nor their pure seats in holy reverence hold,
Him may perdition sweep away,
And thus his wanton pride repay;
Him too, whom wild Ambition prompts to seize,
Though Justice cries aloud, forbear.
Can all his vaunts, who dares attempts like these,
Guard his proud heart from guilty fear?
Such deeds if glory waits, in vain
I lead this choral train.

*Antistrophe* 2.

No more at Delphi's central cell,
At Abæ, or Olympia's hallow'd shrine,
Attendant pay I rites divine,
Till the god deigns this darkness to dispel.
O Jove, if thee we rightly call
The sovereign lord, the king of all,
Let not concealment this in shades enfold
From thee, and thy immortal reign!
The oracles, to Laius giv'n of old,
They spurn with insolent disdain,
No more to Phœbus honours pay;
And things divine decay.

IOCASTA, CHORUS.

*Ioc.* Ancients of Thebes, in this extremity
When ev'n the very steersman of the realm,
To whom we look for our deliverance,
Veering himself with every wind that blows
Of rumour, helplessly resigns the helm,
I come, albeit with these poor woman's hands,

To offer wreath and incense on the shrines
And altars of our tutelary Gods:
And first to thee, Apollo, first to thee,
Whose altar nearest to the palace stands,
And on whose word depends the life of Thebes,
Lest any unconsidered word against
Thy Minister, revolt thy face from us;
Imploring thee with all the Gods in Heav'n
To help where all of human help is vain.

CHORUS.

Barb'd with Death, there are among
The gold-enquiver'd arrows hung
About Apollo's shoulder; whence,
As over heav'n his chariot burns,
The land he loves to harvest turns,
And cities swell with opulence;
Ev'n so, where yet unexpiated sin
Cries out, or undetected lurks within,
The God his lustre turns to pestilence;
And contrite man must worship and abide,
Till, Nemesis and Justice satisfied,
When men least dream it, one relenting ray—
Oh grant, Apollo, grant it as we pray!—
Strikes through sheer midnight, and lets in the day.

HERALD, IOCASTA, CHORUS.

*Her.* Tell me who will among you, men of Thebes,
Which is the palace of King Œdipus,
And, further, if the King himself within.

*Cho.* This is the palace; and the King himself
Within; and she that by that altar stands
Offering her garland to the God, his Queen.

*Her.* Oh, to the prayer she offers at the shrine
She lays the wreath on, be the God benign!
*Ioc.* A Herald! whence, and on what embassy?
*Her.* From Corinth, as the message that I bring.
*Ioc.* Good may the tidings be where all goes ill.
*Her.* If, as things human, not unmix'd with pain,
To you and yours auspicious in the main.
*Ioc.* So far so well; but tell me—
*Her.* . This in sum—
The citizens of Corinth, by my voice,
Proclaim King Œdipus of Thebes their King.
*Ioc.* Œdipus King of Corinth?
*Her.* Even so.
*Ioc.* But does not Polybus in Corinth reign?
*Her.* No; the long years that kept him on the Throne,
At length have laid him in his father's tomb.
*Ioc.* The King of Corinth dead! Polybus dead!
Summon the King! You Oracles of Heaven,
Of what account shall men hereafter hold
Your Ministers—or you? This was the Sire
Whom Œdipus, for fear of slaying, fled,
Now by the common course of Nature dead!

ŒDIPUS, IOCASTA, HERALD, CHORUS.

*Œd.* What tidings? Is the man I sent for here?
*Ioc.* Not he, but one whose coming shall go far
To make his coming needless. Herald, speak.
*Her.* I come from Corinth, by the people there
Charged with a mission to King Œdipus,
Whom, in the room of Polybus now dead,
They call upon to fill the sovereign chair.
*Œd.* My father dead?
*Ioc.* And by no hand of yours!

*Her.* No, nor by any hand but Nature's own,
That lightly rocks, you know, old age to sleep.
*Œd.* And this is he whom by the Oracle
From Phœbus his own lips, myself I heard
Foredoom'd to slay—
Yet with whose death I have no more to do
Than leaving him to languish for the son
Whose hand was to have slain him had he stay'd!
*Ioc.* Did not I say?
*Œd.* But who would not be scared
By such prediction from the God himself—
Of which yet half hangs dark above my head!
*Ioc.* This word from Corinth is a Signal-fire
Assuring us that Oracle, half slain,
Must all lie buried in your father's tomb.
*Œd.* The aged King is dead, you tell me, Herald—
But Merope, his Queen?
*Her.* Lives, and may live
As one that hath not reached her winter yet;
And longer yet to live if you return,
Whose sudden flight from Corinth neither she
Nor Corinth cease to wonder at, and mourn.
*Œd.* Yet, Herald, she herself it was whose love,
That would have held me there, thence banish'd me.
*Her.* If one, a simple subject as I am,
Might ask of him he now salutes for King—
*Œd.* A Prophecy of Phœbus, from the lips
Of Phœbus' self, and utter'd in these ears,
Involving me in worse calamity
With Merope, my mother, who survives,
Than by my father's death I have escaped.
*Her.* I understand not wholly, but thus much,
That 'twas the fear of some mysterious wrong

Against them both which drove you from their side
And from your country.

*Œd.* That, and that alone.

*Her.* I know not if for better or for worse,
But certainly for strangest, Œdipus,
If now for the first time, and from my lips,
You learn that you are not indeed the son
Of those you fled from in that two-fold fear.

*Œd.* You seem a loyal as well-season'd man,
As near in age to him you lately served
As trusted, and I think to me and mine
Well-minded now.

*Her.* If not, I had not told
What told I have.

*Œd.* And would reiterate?

*Her.* By the most solemn oath by which mankind
Adjure the Gods to witness human word.

*Œd.* That I am not in very deed the son
Of Polybus, and Merope his Queen?

*Her.* No more their son than—might I so dare say—
Than son of mine—and that is, not at all.

*Œd.* But was this known in Corinth?

*Her.* To none else
Save to the King and Queen themselves, and me.

*Œd.* Yet 'twas in Corinth when the cup went round
At table, that a guest once startled me
With a light taunt of somewhat like to that
Which now you gravely tell.

*Her.* The random shot
Of idleness, or malice freed by wine,
That sometimes nears the mark.

*Œd.* But how was it
That only you beside the King and Queen

Knew for a truth?

*Her.* Would Œdipus know all?

*Œd.* Yea—on the allegiance you profess to him,
Whom now you have saluted as your King.

*Her.* Thus then I know it: for that I alone
Laid you a new-born babe into their hands
Who, childless as they were, and like to be,
Ev'n took what fortune sent them for their own.

*Cho.* This man bears stranger tidings from himself
Than from his country he was charged withal.

*Œd.* You—and you solely—brought me to their hands—
From whose received me then?

*Ioc.* O Œdipus,
When all, beyond all hope, has ended well,
Why tempt the God, still jealous of success,
By questioning the means?

*Œd.* I bid you speak!

*Her.* You charge me for an answer, Œdipus,
Which, were you not my King who bids me speak,
Yet might resent when spoken—

*Œd.* But one word
Of ev'n unwelcome truth from human lip
Were welcome in the night of mystery
That Fate has gather'd round me.

*Her.* Listen, then.
Long ere in favour of these whitening locks,
And recompence of faithful service done,
King Polybus had made me what I am,
I was his shepherd; and, upon a time
Keeping my flock upon Kithæron's side,
One of like calling with myself, though not
Of the same country, who that summer through
Had fed his sheep beside me, came one day,

And listening first, and looking all about,
With those rough hands of his he laid in mine
As tenderly as any mother might,
A naked infant—say, some three days born—
And fasten'd foot to foot, like some poor lamb,
Which some one of the land from which he came,
Warm from the bosom of its mother took
To perish on the barren mountain's side,
Of cold and hunger. Which the kindly man
Not finding in himself the heart to do,
But yet as fearful if he left undone,
Gave you—for you, King Œdipus, it was—
The very name you bear, remembering
The pitiful condition of the babe—
Gave you to me, to carry far away
And pitifully cherish for my own
Beyond all search of those who wish'd you dead.
So to his country he, and I to mine:
Which when I reach'd, and to my King and Queen
Show'd them the prettiest lamb of all my flock,
They, whether by some instinct of their own
Inspired, or somewhat royal in the Child
Prophetic of the Man that was to be,
Took, nursed, and rear'd to manhood for their own,
And set beside themselves upon the throne.

*Cho.* The Gods upon the mountain-top, men tell,
Do sometimes light, and through the tangled dell
And forest-shade—

*Œd.* A shepherd like yourself,
But not of Corinth. Whence then?

*Her.* Thebes, he said,
To which your destiny recall'd you.

*Œd.* Thebes!

*Ioc.* O Œdipus, by all the Gods in heav'n,
And all that upon earth you hold most dear,
Heed not these stories of the past, patch'd up
By the fallacious memory of old age!

*Œd.* He were by nature baser than base-born
Who would not find and follow to its source
The current of the blood by which he lives.
This Shepherd—and from whom took he the child—
Charged with that ruthless errand?

*Her.* Either I
With mine own duty busied did not ask,
Or he not answer.

*Œd.* But to answer lives?

*Her.* Those of his country best can answer that.

*Œd.* Does any man of all the people here
Remember such a man?

*Cho.* May be the same
Already sent for, who, as I remember,
Like this good Herald, shepherded the flocks
Of Laius, then our Master. But the Queen—

*Ioc.* No more! No more! For your sake, Œdipus,
If not for mine—no more!

*Œd.* Whatever shame
My birth betray, your blood it cannot taint;
Not were I proved the issue of a sire
Three generations deep in slavery.

*Ioc.* Forbear! once more, for one last time, forbear!

*Œd.* If aught you know—and your wild looks and words
But argue somewhat than conjecture worse—
At once reveal it all: for ask I will
Till all be answered.

*Ioc.* Wretched man! the last
These lips shall ever utter you have heard!

*Cho.* She is gone as one distracted. O my Lord,
What should this sudden passion of the Queen
Forbode of ill!

*Œd.* Forbode what ill it may,
But I will solve the riddle of my birth.
The Queen belike, of royal birth herself
And haughty-minded as such women are,
Resents her husband's baser parentage;
But I, regardless of the accident
That oft from royal blood provokes a slave,
I do account myself the royal heir
Of Destiny, who found me where I lay,
By man's blind foresight which defeats itself
Cradled to perish on Kithæron's side,
And taking from a simple shepherd's hand,
So laid me in the lap of Royalty,
And through the days and years of human growth
Rear'd to the kingly stature that I am.
And when, affrighted by vain prophecies,
From Corinth, and the throne prepared me there,
I fled, inalienable Destiny
Pursuing drove me but from throne to throne,
Till, doubling back my course to reach my height,
Now Thebes and Corinth claim me for their own.

CHORUS.

*Strophe.*

If a prophet's soul be mine
Aught illumed with skill divine,
By Olympus' sacred height,
Ere the morning's streaming light,
Thou, Kithæron, shalt unfold
All this mystery round thee roll'd,

And with pride and triumph own
Œdipus thy foster'd son.
Then with joy would we advance,
Leading light the festive dance;
Teach thy woods with joy to ring,
And with transport hail our king.
Glorious with thy silver bow
Phœbus, these our joys allow!

*Antistrophe.*

Who, of all the heav'nly pow'rs,
Gave thee birth in these close bow'rs?
Some bright Nymph of sylvan race
Did the frolic Pan embrace,
Wand'ring o'er the mountain's brow?
Or to Phœbus dost thou owe
Thy birth? For him the craggy height,
Him the pastured dales delight.
Or to him, the god who roves
Through Cyllene's cypress groves?
Or did Bacchus, wont to tread
His loved haunt, the mountain's head,
Thee receive, confess'd his son,
From the Nymphs of Helicon?
Raptured with their tuneful strain
Sportive oft he joins their train.

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ŒDIPUS, SHEPHERD, HERALD, CHORUS.

*Œd.* Whether or not the man we have so long
Been looking after, one at least whose age
Evens with his whose story we have heard.

*Cho.* Whether the same of whom the stranger tells
I know not, but the man himself I know
For an old shepherd of King Laius.

*Her.* And I for him with whom I shepherded
Upon Kithæron's side so long ago.
*Œd.* Approach, old man—still nearer—unafraid;
For nothing but my favour need you fear,
If, looking straight at me, as I at you,
Straightforwardly you answer what I ask.
You, in the days gone by, and long ere Time
Had strewn his silver honour on your head—
You were a servant of King Laius?
*Shep.* His servant—not his slave—no less than he,
Myself a freeman of the soil of Thebes.
*Œd.* As such I understand; and in that wise,
As a free servant of King Laius,
You kept his flocks?
*Shep.* Upon a time I might.
*Œd.* And folding them at home in winter-time,
Led them in Summer forth?
*Shep.* So shepherds use,
Where'er the more and sweeter pasture grew.
*Œd.* And ever on Kithæron's grassy sides
In summer-time, remember you this man,
Old as yourself, keeping his flock with yours?
*Shep.* Time that has silver'd, as you say, my locks,
Has somewhat dimm'd both eyes and memory.
*Œd.* None older than your fellow-shepherd here,
Who with his locks as silver-touch'd as yours,
Sees, and recalls in you the man of yore.
*Shep.* May be; but all men are not all alike,
And he may err as well remembering me,
As I forgetting him.
*Her.* Listen to me,
And let my voice, and what it has to tell,
Recall to you the man your eyes do not.

Can you not call to mind, though long ago,
Keeping your flock with one whose flock, like yours,
Grazed on Kithæron, one long summer through—
*Shep.* With more than one, may be.
*Her.* Nay, but with one
To whom, just as that same long summer closed,
And cold Arcturus warn'd the shepherd home,
You brought a naked infant—
*Shep.* Brought? who brought?
*Her.* Tied by the feet—
*Shep.* What should one know of that?
*Her.* Being myself the man you gave it to.
*Shep.* Methinks this man, whoever he may be,
And howsoever gifted with good eyes,
Is something weaker in his wits than I,
Recounting all such idle rhapsody.
*Œd.* And you, sharp-witted as you are, methinks
Seem looking round about you for escape
In hesitation—but escape shall not.
Look you! Beware!
*Shep.* What have I said amiss?
*Œd.* Not said, but will not say.
*Shep.* What would you have?
*Œd.* The babe your fellow-shepherd asks about—
That naked, new-born, ankle-fetter'd babe,
Did not you bring and put into his hands?
*Shep.* And would to Heaven had died before I did!
*Œd.* And death you shall not have to pray for long,
If, knowing what prevarication proves
You know, you not reveal.
*Shep.* And if reveal!
Have you not heard enough?
*Œd.* No, if not all.

The babe you put into this shepherd's hands
Was not your own?
*Shep.* Oh, not mine own!
*Œd.* Then whose?
*Shep.* O Œdipus, my master, and my lord!
In mercy question me no more!
*Œd.* No more
In mercy if you answer not at once.
*Shep.* O me! The terror of your countenance
Scatters what little memory age has left!
What if I found the little helpless thing
There laid alone and none to tell me whose?
Or he from whom I took it knew no more
Than he to whom I gave it?
*Œd.* Bind his hands:
The lash must loose the tongue.
*Shep.* O Œdipus,
Shame not white hairs!
*Œd.* Nay, shame them not yourself
By false prevarication with your King.
That helpless babe—me—Œdipus—your King—
Who gave into your hands?
*Shep.* Alas! alas!
One of the household of the King that was!—
*Œd.* Slave? Servant? Who?
*Shep.* Alas! one now within
Can answer all!
*Œd.* Answer yourself then, who?
*Shep.* Woe's me! I drift into destruction's mouth!
*Œd.* And I with you. But who?
*Shep.* Alas! The Queen!
*Œd.* The Queen!
*Shep.* Ev'n Iocasta's sacred self!

*Œd.* But not her own?
*Shep.* I said not that—
*Œd.* Her own?
*Shep.* Yourself have said.
*Cho.* The man is turn'd to stone!

[*After a silence.*]

*Œd.* The God of Delphi has revenged himself!
His oracle defied of long ago,
And his insulted prophet's of to-day,
Break in one judgment o'er my head, who now,
Myself sole witness and interpreter,
Divine that half reveal'd is all fulfill'd*,
And on myself myself pronounce my doom.
*Cho.* O Œdipus, my lord—
*Œd.* Speak to me not,
Approach me not, unless at once to slay,
Or thrust with execration from the walls,
The wretch convicted of the double crime
Of parricide, and—Ha! the prophet said
That, ere the Day which all beholds go down,
I shall have look'd my last upon the Sun
Which all accomplishes—and, ere we pass
To darkness, somewhat yet is to be done.

CHORUS.

*Strophe.*

Ye race of mortals, what your state?
Life I an airy nothing deem.

* In the original, if I mistake not, Œdipus convicts himself of murdering his Father without asking the Evidence of the Witness he had sent for.

For what, ah! what your happiest fate,
More than light fancy's high-wrought dream?
How soon those baseless dreams decay,
And all the glittering visions melt away!
Whilst thy example, hapless king,
Thy life, thy fortune I bewail,
Happy no man of mortal birth I hail.
Thine was no vulgar fate: its tow'ring wing
To wealth, and empire's splendid summit soar'd:
When, silenced her mysterious lore,
The harpy-talon'd monster scream'd no more,
Our bulwark thou against that pest abhorr'd,
Thebes gave her sceptre to thy honour'd hand,
And hail'd thee monarch of a mighty land.

*Antistrophe.*

Who now is pierced with keener pain?
To all thy glories bid farewell:
They fly, and in their stead a train
Of miseries crowd with thee to dwell.
To one great port, illustrious king,
Their gallant barks the son and father bring;
But sink in wild waves roaring round.
How could thy father's bed so long,
Ah, how in silence bear the horrid wrong!
But thee th' all-seeing eye of time hath found,
And these unhallow'd rites abhorrent shows.
O son of Laius, ne'er again,
Ne'er could my sorrowing heart thy sight sustain:
Yet I lament in mournful strains thy woes,
By thee 'twas mine to life, to light, to rise;
By thee in dark despair to close my eyes.

MESSENGER, CHORUS.

*Mess.* O venerable Senators of Thebes,
O liege-men of the house of Labdacus,
What shall you hear—what not behold—of such
Pollution in the Palace of your Kings,
Which all the waters in one volume drown'd
Of Nile and Ister could not wash away!
*Cho.* What we already have beheld and heard
Were but prophetic of yet worse to come;
Tell us the worst.
*Mess.* If breath I have to tell,
If not the worst, the worse that first befell.
The light of Iocasta's life is quench'd!
*Cho.* Alas, not strange as terrible! But how?
*Mess.* By her own hand; as by my eyes indeed
I cannot, but from others can, avouch,
With such bewilder'd senses as I may—
When, as you witness'd for yourselves, from hence
She fled, and flew distractedly within,
Shrieking, and tearing her grey locks, she ran
Along the echoing walls until she reach'd
The nuptial chamber, shot the bolt within,
And by the affrighted women lock'd without
Was heard calling on 'Laius, Laius!
Her husband Laius, father of the Son
Who slew, and worse dishonour'd him when dead!'
This, and much more, and much more terrible,
They heard: and then a silence as of death,
Through all the house; till with the sudden yell
As of some wild beast closing on his prey,
King Œdipus along the corridor

With imprecations half articulate,
Fearful to hear—too fearful to relate—
With thrice the force of the mad Herakles
He flung himself against the chamber-door,
And bursting in, to all who dared to look
Disclosed the wretched woman hanging dead.
Whom when he saw, roaring, he sprang upon,
And tearing from the beam flung down aheap,
And spurn'd; and then, most horrible of all,
Wide open tore the raiment from her breast,
From which himself recoiling with a shriek,
He struck the golden clasp into his eyes,
Which having seen such things, henceforth, he said,
Should in the light of Day behold no more
Those whom he loved, nor, in the after-dark
Of Hades, those he loathed, to look upon.
Then rising, blind, and bleeding as he was,
He groped and stagger'd back the way he came,
Vociferating as he went along
That none who would not share the curse with him
Should touch unless to slay him—till he reach'd
The palace-door, and would, methinks, have that,
As of the nuptial chamber, open burst,
Had not King Creon bid them lead him in
Where none henceforth should hear, and none behold,
Till Thebes his fate determine.—All is told.

CHORUS.

Oh men of Thebes, this famous man behold,
Who coming here a stranger to the gate,
The Sphinx's fatal riddle did unfold,
And chosen King, as Saviour of the State

So greatly ruled, and rose to such Renown
As not a King but envied: now by Fate
To such a Depth precipitated down
As not a Wretch but may commiserate.
Beholding which, and counsell'd by the wise,
That Nemesis regards with jealous eyes
Man's over-much, and at his elbow stands
To shake the full cup in the steadiest hands,
Deem not the wisest of To-morrow sure,
Nor fortunate account him till he dies.

PART II.

# ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ŒDIPUS.
ANTIGONE, *his Daughter.*
POLYNICES, *his Son.*
CREON OF THEBES.
THESEUS, *King of Athens.*
AN ATHENIAN CITIZEN.
AN ATHENIAN MESSENGER.
HERALD FROM THEBES.

CHORUS OF ATHENIAN ELDERS.

*Scene: A road near* ATHENS, *bordered by the Sacred* GROVE *of the* EUMENIDES.

# ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS.

ŒDIPUS, ANTIGONE.

*Œd.* The dawn which breaks not on my sightless eyes
Salutes my forehead with reviving warmth:
Here let us rest awhile, Antigone,
From this brief travel stol'n by fear from night.
But know you whither it hath led us, and
Among what strangers, who from charity
Shall with sufficient for the day provide
For one with less than little satisfied?

*Ant.* I know from one who cross'd us in the dusk,
With steps as hurried as our own, the land
Is Attica.

*Œd.* Ay, I remember now.

*Ant.* And not far off I see the shining walls
And marble temple-fronts, and citadel,
As of some stately city: and the place
We stand on, as for some peculiar use
Sequester'd from the daily track of men,
Where a pure rill of water rambles through
Untrampled herbage, overshaded all
With laurel, and with olive, poplar-topt,
As you may guess from many a nightingale
About us warbling, well assured of home.

*Œd.* And might not, haply, some poor hunted thing,
With but a sorry burden for his song,
Here, too, some breathing-while of refuge find?
*Ant.* And in good time comes of the country one
Who shall advise us, lest, as strangers here,
We trespass on the usages of those
To whom we look for shelter and support.

*Enter an* ATHENIAN.

O stranger—
*Ath.* Hush! Before another word—
Where ev'n a word unlawful—how much more
With the soil'd foot of Travel trespassing
On consecrated ground!
*Œd.* I yet dare ask
Whether to Deity, or Demigod,
Thus consecrate?
*Ath.* To Deity, and such
As least of all will Men's intrusion brook
Within their hallow'd precincts.
*Œd.* Who be they?
*Ath.* None other but those awful Sisters Three,
Daughters of Earth and Darkness.
*Œd.* By what name
Invoked of men?
*Ath.* By whatsoever name
Elsewhere invoked, here, with averted eyes,
And with an inward whisper—"The Benign."
*Œd.* Benign then, as their name and nature is
To those who suffer and who do no wrong,
May they receive the sightless suppliant, who,
By no false Insight, howbeit unaware,
Within their Sanctuary first setting foot,
Alive shall never leave it but to die

*Ath.* Your words I understand not; but I know.
Whether to live or die, depart you must
*Œd.* But what, if rather fearing unjust Man
Than the just God, and those same awful Three,
If stern to guilt, not unbenign to me,
I leave their hallow'd refuge?
*Ath.* Nay, for that
The land itself is dedicated all
To God or Demigod, who, Just themselves,
Protect and vindicate the Just: for here
Poseidon rules, the Master of the Seas,
And there Prometheus, with his torch of Life:
The ground about us glories in the name
Of King Colonus of the Horse; and this
Same highway running by the Sacred Grove
Leads to the City and the Citadel
Surnamed of Her who keeps them for her own.
*Œd.* As such I do salute her!—And the King
That, under her, her chosen people rules—
*Ath.* Theseus, the son of Ægeus, and, like him,
Though mortal yet, almost the Demigod.
*Œd.* Theseus, the son of Ægeus,—ay, I know
And know indeed that no delusive light
Led me to him with whom I have to do.
Shall one among your fellow-citizens
Bear your King word from one who once was King,
And who, unkinglike as his presence now,
Can tell him that which, if he hearken to,
Shall, for a little service done to me,
Do to his kingdom and himself much more?
*Ath.* Strange as the message from so strange a man,
Yet shall King Theseus hear of it. Meanwhile,
If in despite of warning and advice

You still refuse to leave this holy ground,
I, that am but a simple citizen,
Dare not enforce; but forthwith shall apprize
Those of the City who shall deal with you,
As in their wisdom best they shall advise.

ŒDIPUS, ANTIGONE.

*Œd.* Is he departed?
*Ant.* We are all alone.
*Œd.* Daughters of Earth and Darkness! In whose womb
Unborn till Sovereign Order the new World
From Chaos woke, yourselves you still secrete,
With those three Fatal Sisters who the thread
Of Human Life do spin among the Dead,
While you the scourge of human Wrong prepare;
If peradventure with unlicensed feet
The consecrated earth I have profaned,
That veils your Presence from this upper air,
Renounce me not: no, nor in me the God
Who destined, nor the God who prophesied,
That, after drifting the blind wreck I am
About the world, a Horror to Mankind,
Within the Temple of that Triple wrath
That Nemesis unyoked to scourge me down,
At last the haven of my rest should find;
If satisfied at last be wrath Divine,
And men err not who name its ministers,
Though not without a shudder—"The Benign,"
Let your avenging Justice, that so long
Hath chased the guiltless instrument of Wrong,
Here grant him rest until the Power whose throne
You dwell beside in Darkness give the sign.

CHORUS, ŒDIPUS, ANTIGONE.

*Cho.* These are the strangers—this the sightless man,
And this the maiden that he told us of,
Who impiously this consecrated ground
Have ventured to profane.
*Œd.* Not impiously,
But ignorantly, who first setting foot
Upon this alien soil—
*Cho.* But impiously,
When warn'd upon what consecrated ground,
With honey-flowing waters running through
The inviolable herbage, still persist—
A stranger too, where no Athenian born,
Not only dares not enter, but pass by
Save with averted eyes, and inward prayer,
That holy lips scarce dare articulate.
*Ant.* We must obey them, Father, as we should.
*Œd.* You will not, if I quit the Sanctuary,
Do, nor let others do me violence?
*Cho.* Fear not the wrath of men, but that of those
Who watch you through the soil which you profane.
*Œd.* But who, if of their counsel more you knew,
As sooner than you look for know you may,
Would not resent, as you, the wrong I do them.
Meanwhile, on no worse usage than from them
Relying when committed to your hands—
Lead me, Antigone.
*Cho.* Till you have pass'd
The bound of sequestration—further yet—
And yet a little further—so, enough.
There, travel-wearied, and, perchance, in years
Well stricken, rest upon the bank awhile.

But, ere I bid you welcome to the land
Whose sanctity your foot at first profaned,
Tell who you are, and whence.
*Œd.* To tell you "Who"
Would tell you all: and if I hesitate—
*Cho.* Not to declare your country and your name
Augurs but evil for yourself or it.
*Œd.* You of that City have heard tell, whose walls
To Music rose, and whose Inhabitants,
From the sown Dragon's teeth sprung up arm'd men?
*Cho.* Of Thebes? Ay, much of olden times, and of
The worse than Dragon Sphinx that in our day
The Dragon seed devour'd.
*Œd.* And of the man
Who slew that worse than Dragon—
*Cho.* Œdipus!
As by the signal of those sightless eyes,
And lingering self-avowal, I divine—
*Œd.* Revolt not from me.
*Cho.* And for You! for You—
May be, the monster most unnatural—
To set your foot upon the holiest spot
Of this all-consecrated Athens! You!
Who, were your very presence not enow
Contamination to the land, and shame,
May bring on us the plague you left at Thebes!
I should not wrong a promise half implied
If with these hands I tore you from the Land
Your impious presence doubly violates,
Where e'en the guiltless dare not enter—Hence!
Begone! Pollute our land no more! Begone!
*Ant.* O men of Athens! if you will not hear
My Father pleading for himself, hear me,

Not for myself, but for my Father pleading,
As to a Father, by the love you bear
The Daughter by yon Altar-hearth at home,
And by the Gods we worship as yourselves.

*Cho.* Daughter, the Gods whom you adjure us by,
Repudiating Œdipus from Thebes,
From Athens also do repudiate.

*Œd.* O then of Fame that blows about the world
The praise of men and nations, what the worth,
If Athens—Athens, through the world renown'd
For hospitable generosity—
Athens, who boasts the power as much as will
To save and succour the misfortunate—
If she that honour forfeit at your hands,
Who, from the very horror of my name,
And shapeless rumour of the terrible things
Which I have suffer'd, rather than have done,
Would thrust me from the Sanctuary forth
Of those whose law you violate no less
By broken Faith, than with unwary foot
Did I their consecrated soil transgress?
One, too, that howsoe'er you know it not,
Ev'n with the Ban that drives him from his own
Carries a Blessing with him to the Land
That shall accept him, and a Curse to those
Who, being his, henceforth shall be their foes.
All which, unto my inward eye as clear
As yonder Sun that shines in Heav'n to yours,
I shall reveal to him who governs here,
If hearing he deny me not. Meanwhile,
I do adjure you, by those Deities
Whose Sanctuary you have drawn me from,
Do me no violence; remembering

That, if Benign they be, Avengers too,
As of all outraged Law, so not the less
Of violated hospitality.

*Cho.* We have discharged ourselves in warning you,
And to King Theseus, whom you summon'd here,
Your cause and self henceforward we commit
To deal with, and adjudge as seems him fit.

THESEUS, ŒDIPUS, ANTIGONE, CHORUS.

*Thes.* I have been hither summon'd at the call
Of one from whom, 'twas said, the light of Day
Together with his Kingdom pass'd away:
And, knowing of one such, and one alone,
Reported in the roll of living men,
Nor uninstructed in the destiny
Which from the glory it had raised him to
Precipitated to a depth so low,
Amid the ruin of this fallen man
I know that Œdipus of Thebes is he.
I too remember when like him forlorn,
I wandered friendless in a foreign land,
And with an alien people much endured:
And, had I always been what now I am,
Yet none the less by what myself have known
Than by the records of Mankind, aware
That, howsoever great a King To-day,
No surer of To-morrow than yourself;
Therefore whatever Athens or her King
Of hospitable service can supply,
Let him demand: for much indeed it were
For Œdipus to ask and me withhold.

*Œd.* O Theseus, if indeed the King I was

Look through the ruin of the wretch I am,
No less doth full assurance of a King,
Although to these quencht eyes insensible,
Breathe through the generous welcome of your word,
And ere of my necessities I tell,
Assure me of the boon as yet unask'd.
For the detested story of my life,
Unask'd, you know it—whence, and what I was,
To what catastrophe reserved you see—
Yet not so ignominious to myself,
No, nor to Athens so unprofitable,
Will you but listen, and do that for me,
Which, howsoever strange from lips like mine,
Is sure as Fate itself, as Fate it is.

*Thes.* Doubt not, however strange, whether or not
To Athens profitable, if to you,
What Œdipus demands shall Theseus do.

*Œd.* But profitable shall it be to both,
Unless the Spokesman of Futurity
From Delphi shall have prophesied a lie:
For this unsightly remnant of a king—
Though while it breathes a burden to us both,
But when the breath is out of it, to be
More serviceable to you than good looks—
I do consign to you for sepulture
Under the walls that, as they shelter'd me
While living, after death will I defend.

*Thes.* But of the life you have to live between
This hour and that why take you no account?

*Œd.* No; for the life between this hour and that
In that sepulture is provided for.

*Thes.* You ask an easy favour at my hands,
Whether for life or death.

*Œd.* Nevertheless,
May be, to promise easier than to do.
*Thes.* How so?
*Œd.* Those loving friends of mine in Thebes,
Who would not when I pray'd them, now, per-force,
If not per-suasion, when myself would not,
Will have me back with them.
*Thes.* And what if Thebes,
Relenting, or repenting, Œdipus—
*Œd.* O, not repenting or relenting, Thebes,
But by an Oracle of Phœbus scared,
Which told them that unless they get me home,
To live what Life they leave me, and, when dead,
Lie tomb'd outside—*outside*, I say—their Gates
They shall not thrive in war against the foe,
Whose walls shall overshadow what they lose.
As Thebes shall find should ever strife arise
Between herself and Athens, if their King
Vouchsafe me that which I have ask'd of him.
*Thes.* But Thebes and Athens, friendly powers of old,
What quarrel should arise to make them foes?
*Œd.* O Son of Ægeus! to the Gods alone
Belongs immunity from Change and Death:
All else doth all controlling Time confound.
Earth waxes old: and all that from her womb
She brings to light upon her bosom dies,
And all is mutability between.
Ev'n so with Man, who never at one stay,
No less in mind than body changeable,
Likes what he liked not, loathes where once he loved,
And then perchance to liking turns again.
And as with man, with Nation none the less.
If now with Thebes and Athens all look fair,

Yet Time his furrow'd track of Night and Day
Pursues, wherein some grain of Discord dropt,
Perhaps no bigger than an idle word,
That shall infect his kindly Brotherhood,
And ripen'd Amity to rancour turn.
As one day—for I prophesy—shall be,
When my cold ashes underneath these walls
Shall drink the warm blood of my enemies—
Ev'n as they might upon this quarrel now,
Had Thebes not other foe to deal withal.

*Thes.* Rumour hath reach'd us of some warlike stir,
But on what quarrel—

*Œd.* Thebes against herself.
For those two sons of mine, who for so long
In the Egyptian fashion, as I thought,
Kept house, and did the women's work within,
Now, full adult in arrogance and pride,
Assert their sex to quarrel for the throne
From which they banish'd me: Eteocles
The younger, with the subtle Creon's aid,
Not only seizes first, but yet withholds
The sceptre from his elder brother's hand;
Who, as by sure intelligence I learn,
Hath fled to Argos, and so cunningly
Made good his cause, that King Adrastus there
Gives him his daughter's hand in marriage, and
Along with her, by way of royal dower,
A host in arms that shall reconquer Thebes,
And set my elder son upon—my Throne.
And now by Phœbus' Oracle forewarn'd
That Victory no less within my Tomb
Shall live than in what now survives of me,
And fearful now of what they wish'd before,

Lest any day should find, where they might not,
Their victim, less by years than by the load
Of shame and woe they laid upon him, dead,
They dog my steps like vultures on the track
Of gathering battle, and the sharpest scent
May even now be close upon my heels.

*Cho.* Whether with Argos Thebes for war prepares,
Behold a Herald, from whatever land
I know not, as a messenger of Peace
To Athens, with that Olive in his hand.

*Enter* HERALD *from* THEBES.

*Her.* Creon of Thebes by mine his Herald's voice
To Theseus, King of Athens, greeting sends,
Craving from him due licence to confer
With Œdipus, the King of Thebes that was,
Now by report upon Athenian soil—

*Œd.* Oh, I forefelt his coming in the wind!—

*Her.* Until which licence granted by the King,
With a small retinue he waits aloof
Before advancing to the City's wall.

*Thes.* Your King does well; and to his courtesy
With a like greeting Athens shall reply.

*Œd.* Oh, let no greeting made to him impeach
What first vouchsafed to me!

*Thes.* Fear not for that:
The courtesy which courtesy returns
No less leaves Œdipus sole arbiter
To grant or to refuse what Thebes demands.

*Œd.* If so, this Herald need not tarry long,
Nor overtax his memory with the word
That I shall freight him with.

*Thes.* And yet methinks
That e'en from lips he loves not Œdipus
Might hear a word that should send up the scale
Which now so down against his Country weighs.
What once you heard, if when you heard it true
May, by the changing Time and Circumstance
Of which you tell me, now be Truth no more.

*Œd.* More false than Creon Falsehood cannot be.
O Theseus, one of heart and speech yourself,
You know not what the double tongue can do.

*Thes.* Nay, but the tongue which you so much distrust
Will have to deal not with myself but you,
Who know the man, and how to sift the word,
As once of one more cunning than himself.
And for all other argument than word,
Myself and Athens are engaged for that.

*Œd.* Be't so—vouchsafe but to be here yourself,
As Witness and as Judge between us both,
And you shall hear the Truth from those false lips
Wrung out, which had been told you by the true,
Had not that busy Herald interposed
His olive leaf between yourself and me.

*Thes.* Witness I may be, but of neither Judge
In that which but concerns yourself and Thebes.
But, whichsoever way the scale may turn,
Not Judgment's self, save from the God's own lip,
Against your will shall move you from my side.
Meanwhile, within the City, Œdipus,
With such observance as becomes myself
With me abide this meeting.

*Œd.* Ill beseems
The mendicant demurring at the hand
That but too generously deals with him.

But the prophetic voice of Destiny,
That led me hither, will not let me hence,
Till he have giv'n the signal to be gone.

*Thes.* Be't as you will; with these good men abide
Secure, as in my promise, which I call
The Power beside whose sacred grove we stand
To witness, as I pledge it with my hand.

*Œd.* Theseus, ere this the Gods whom you adjure
Themselves had sworn by Fate the fore-decreed
Requital of that generosity
Which no requital looks for; and I know
That even now, escaping through their hands,
The Blessing strives to anticipate the Deed

*Cho.* But, that no evil influence thwart its way,
And to propitiate that jealous Power
Whose Sanctuary you at first profaned—
You, Œdipus, and you, whose pious hand
Leading him wrong, like expiation need—
Returning to the consecrated shade
Of one that in its inmost shadow dwells,
Its dedicated Priest and Minister,
The ceremonial he enjoins obey,
First, by lustration in the sacred stream;
Then to the sacred Earth, whereunder keep
Those Three Benign ones ever on the watch,
Thrice three libations from three vessels pour—
Of honey mixt with water, but no wine:
Which when the forest-shaded Earth has supt,
Upon her bosom olive wands thrice three
Lay with a prayer within the lips suppress'd;
And then, with unreverting eyes to us
Returning, wait in confidence the rest.

CHORUS.

*Strophe* 1.

Well, stranger, to these rural seats
Thou comest, this region's blest retreats,
Where white Colonus lifts his head,
And glories in the bounding steed.
Where sadly sweet the frequent nightingale
Impassion'd pours her evening song,
And charms with varied notes each verdant vale,
The ivy's dark-green boughs among;
Or shelter'd 'midst the cluster'd vine,
Which high above, to form a bow'r
Safe from the sun or stormy show'r,
Loves its thick branches to entwine;
Where frolic Bacchus always roves,
And visits with his fost'ring Nymphs the groves.

*Antistrophe* 1.

Bathed in the dew of heav'n each morn
Fresh is the fair Narcissus born,
Of these great pow'rs the crown of old:
The Crocus glitters robed in gold.
Here restless fountains ever murm'ring glide,
And as their crisped streamlets stray
To feed, Cephisus, thy unfailing tide,
Fresh verdure marks their winding way;
And as their pure streams roll along
O'er the rich bosom of the ground,
Quick spring the plants, the flow'rs around
Here oft to raise the tuneful song
The virgin band of Muses deigns;
And car-borne Venus guides her golden reins

*Strophe* 2.

What nor rich Asia's wide domain,
Nor all that sea-encircled land

From Doric Pelops named, contain,
Here, unrequired the cult'ring hand,
The hallow'd plant spontaneous grows,
Striking cold terror through our foes.
Here blooms, this favour'd region round,
The fertile Olive's hoary head;
The young, the old behold it spread,
Nor dare with impious hand to wound:
For Morian Jove with guardian care
Delights to see it flourish fair;
And Pallas, fav'ring, from the skies
Rolls the blue lustre of her eyes.

*Antistrophe* 2.

My voice yet once more let me raise,
Yet other glories to relate:
A potent god for these we praise,
His presents to this favour'd state;
The Steed obedient to the rein,
And safe to plough the subject main.
Our highest vaunt is this, thy grace
Saturnian Neptune, we behold
The ruling curb emboss'd with gold
Control the courser's manag'd pace.
Though loud, O King, thy billows roar,
Our strong hands grasp the well-form'd oar;
And, while the Nereids round it play,
Light cuts our bounding bark its way.

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THESEUS, ŒDIPUS, CREON, ANTIGONE, CHORUS.

*Thes.* Son of Menœceus, of the realm of Thebes,
A Ruler, and its Representative;
Your peaceful advent by your Herald's voice
Duly proclaim'd as much from me demands

Of courteous welcome and acknowledgment.
The purport of your mission to this Land
Yourself have told me, as foretold by him,
Who, till to-day a stranger like yourself,
And by no Herald like yourself announced,
Yet once a King, is still a King to me.
And at his bidding am I present now,
Not as a Judge between you to decide
A question that concerns yourselves alone,
But to hear that which, though he needs it not,
Should justify that honour at my hands
Which his ill Fate has forfeited in Thebes;
And as a King in Athens to remain,
If by persuasion or just argument
You fail to move him ev'n to reign with you.

*Cre.* O Theseus, Son of Ægeus, and still more
Than Ægeus' self about the world proclaim'd,
Slayer of the fiery-breathing Minotaur,
And hordes of Men than one such monster worse:
The Monarch of a State, if any in Greece,
In men and means abounding, of the Gods
Observant, and of Justice to Mankind,
With your world-famous Areopagus,
No less for Wisdom than for Arms renown'd,
Like Her whose tutelary name you boast.
On what a peaceful mission I am come,
My Herald first, and the small retinue
That follows me, sufficiently declare:
To trespass not on foreign Land or Law—
No, nor on his who, having found his way,
Hath found a home on this Athenian soil;
But whom, with what fair argument I may
Of Kindred and of Country, I would fain,

However royally entreated here,
Persuade with me back to his home again.

*Cho.* You know the man, though, haply, not the man
He was, whom now you are to deal withal.

*Cre.* Therefore to him will I address myself,
In words as few and unrhetorical
As simple Truth needs to be clothed withal
In summing a momentous question up:
Praying the Goddess underneath whose shade
We here are standing to direct them home.
O Œdipus! my Brother—once my King—
And King once more to be, will you but hear
What for myself, and with me Thebes, I speak;
Sore wearied both under this long divorce
From one that once the Saviour was of all,
Under a judgment which your evil Fate
Prepared, yourself invoked on your own head,
And Thebes must execute if Thebes would live.
But as no judgment wrought by human hand,
And most to him that suffers from the blow,
But of the shaking hand that dealt it tells—
What of misdeed, or of misfortune what,
Suffer'd or done—unwittingly by you
Done, and by Thebes unwillingly redress'd—
Behold at last, by Fate's accomplishment,
The Oracles of Phœbus justified,
The Gods by expiation of the Curse
Appeased, and Thebes once more herself again,
Like one recover'd from a mortal throe,
And fain to fold him to her heart once more
Who saved her once, and yet a second time
Who sacrificed himself that she might live;
Your Country reaches out beseeching arms,

Land over land, until she finds you here,
Among a People, with a King alike
In hospitality renown'd as arms,
But, welcome and entreat you as they may,
Who cannot be to you, nor you to them,
As Œdipus to Thebes, or Thebes to him.
Wherefore I do beseech you, Œdipus,
By all the ties that man to man endear
Of kindred and of country; by all those
That King to People bind, as them to him:
Yea, by the God, who, for a secret end
That Man not fathoms, having parted them,
Now, reconciled himself, would reconcile;
Be all that erring Man on either side
Hath done amiss forgotten as forgiv'n,
And Œdipus and Thebes as one again.
Look! I, more burden'd than yourself by years;
And, little as you think it, like yourself
Bow'd down with execution of the Doom
Whereunder you now labour self-condemn'd,
With long and weary travel have I come,
Half fearful of less prosperous return,
Imploring you, if I cannot persuade
With argument that shall commend itself,
If not to you, to those you trust in here,
Yet in the eyes of Athens shame me not
By sending empty-handed back to Thebes.

*Cho.* The Man has spoken: and to us it seems
In well-consider'd word, King Œdipus,
And temper that invites a like reply.

*Œd.* Temper and word so well consider'd, friends
That, unaccustom'd as I long have been
To civil greeting till I lighted here,

And haply not the man I was to guess
The well-consider'd word—But thus it runs:
That, satisfied at length with all the shame
And beggary Thebes condemned and left me to,
To expiate the crime—

*Cre.* I said not that—

*Œd.* On which just Judgment done—though, by the way,
Granting the Judgment just, I yet might ask
If you, my kinsman, and those sons of mine,
Must needs become its executioner?

*Cre.* To Greece do I appeal if you yourself
On your own head drew not the Judgment down
Which Fate decreed and Phœbus prophesied,
And upon which the People's Being hung;
And which who but the People's Magistrate,
Kinsman or other, needs must execute?

*Œd.* By setting on the rabble pack of Thebes
To yelp me through the gates? But let that pass:
For now the rabble pack, to make amends,
Send those who set them on to hunt me back.

*Cre.* If you will have it so, so must it be:
So but to good result on either side.

*Œd.* Yet somewhat late amends on yours, I think,
Whether by People or by Magistrate:
Who, when the Plague by ceasing long ago
Proved Expiation duly made by me,
And I myself, worn with the load of shame
I bore about with me among strange men,
Cried out to lay my weary burden down—
Were 't with my life—among mine own once more,
Then would you not to my entreaty grant
What, unbesought, you come beseeching now.

*Cre.* The People, panic-stricken with the storm

That, having made such havoc in their ranks,
Had scarcely pass'd, still dreaded its return.
*Œd.* And prithee, Creon, how recomforted,
And to my presence reconciled at last?
*Cre.* The Magistrates whom you so much distrust,
Adding the voice of their authority
To theirs who by their sacred ministry
The will of Heaven divine—
*Œd.* Teiresias still!
Whose refluent years against the base itself
Of Delphi breaking shiver out of sight?
Ay, he it was who with its breath surcharged,
First trumpeted me forth; and now perhaps,
When other Augury and Omen fail'd
People and Magistrate to reassure,
By some new summons from the Delphian shrine,
Hath quicken'd Thebes to reconciliation
By something stronger than regretful Love.
*Cre.* What mean you, Œdipus?
*Œd.* No more but this;
That, as I wander'd—not so long ago—
About the world begging my daily bread,
A little wind from Delphi wandering too
Came up with me, and whisper'd in my ears
That, unless Thebes should have me back again,
She would not thrive in arms against the foe
That even then was knocking at her doors.
*Cre.* I scarcely thought the selfsame Œdipus,
Who scarce would heed Apollo's Prophet once,
Should for a Prophet's take the wandering voice
Of rumour in the wind.
*Œd.* And, did I not,
As, spite of taunt, now better taught, I do,

The pious Creon never fail'd in faith,
And by his presence here and now attests
That wandering voice from Delphi told me true:
And somewhat more. For, to be plain with you,
Another wind, that not from Delphi blew,
But somehow slipping through your city gates,
Whisper'd how Thebes, of that same Oracle
From Delphi self-assured, but not the less,
Despite of Augur and of Soothsayer,
Still apprehensive of my presence there,
Would have me back—would have me back indeed,
Not while I lived to fold me to her heart
With those beseeching arms you tell me of,
But at arm's length—outside the city walls—
Like some infectious leper there to bide
Till Death, which surely could not come too fast,
And might perchance be quicken'd if too slow,
Even in death dishonour'd as in life,
Should safely hide me in the ground below.

*Cre.* What! has some traitor been deluding you
With some swoll'n rumour of the market-place?

*Œd.* Traitor to you, as true to me, but not
To you more traitor than to you yourself,
If, as I think, who cannot see your face—
I thank the Gods I cannot—but those here
Shall witness where the startled countenance
Convicts the false denial of the tongue.

*Cre.* Ev'n were that babbling traitor's word as true
As he is false, I see not Œdipus
Much otherwise among his new friends here,
Than among those he counts for foes at home.

*Œd.* You see not, for you know not how ere long—
How soon I know not, but not long, I know—

What others here now witness, standing round,
And some you see not watching underground,
Why from this spot, by which I first set foot,
I would not—no, not to be seated by
King Theseus' side in his Acropolis,
I would not move until I went to die.
Whether or no you guess my mystery,
Enough! you see I have unravell'd yours.
Begone! You lose but time and tongue—Begone!
And tell your people this on your return:
That, were the word from Delphi, and the word
From Thebes as false as you pretend it—yea,
False as yourself—I would not back with you;
No—not were all the Dragon brood of Thebes,
From the first armèd harvest of the teeth
That ancient Cadmus sow'd the field withal
Raised from the dust to join the living host
Who yell'd me forth—all these, and all the way
From Thebes to Athens grovelling at your heels
Back would I not with you—no, not to reign
Enthroned among them as I was before,
Much less a tainted leper like to lie
Outside your walls while living, and, when dead,
There huddled under as a thing accursed,
Save for the Victory that within me lies,
And shall but quicken as the body dies.
No; the same answer that I make to you,
Take home with you to all: on this same spot
Of earth, which now I stand a beggar on,
Beside this consecrated Grove, in which
By no delusive Inspiration drawn
I first set foot—I say, my Throne is here,
Deep-based as Hades, fix'd as Fate itself;

And this poor staff I long have lean'd upon
The Sceptre, wherewith from the world beneath
I shall direct the issues of the war
That shall determine wingéd Victory
To settle on the Land where tomb'd I lie.

*Cre.* Theseus, in vain to reason with a man,
Still more the slave that evermore he was
Of Passion which inveterates with years;
Suspecting even those who mean him well,
As once myself; and when, to his own cost,
Falsely he found, as with such men it fares,
He first injustice justifies by worse.
Therefore to you, King Theseus, and to these
Grave Councillors of Athens, I appeal:
And, irrespective of the ties that bind
All men to kith and country, but which he,
Despite all loving offer on their side,
Irreconcilably repudiates—ask,
If that same Oracle which he pretends
By some vague rumour reach'd his ears say true,
And that victorious power, as he pretends,
Be lodged in him, whether alive or dead—
Is he not bound, reluctant though he be,
With his returning presence to requite
The deadly mischief which it wrought before?—
A Pestilence so terrible to Thebes
As almost to extermination thinn'd
Her people, and yet leaves but half array'd
Against the foe now knocking at her doors.
For such a foe we have to deal withal—
Adrastus, King of Argos, who, by this
Man's son, and by his own ambition, led,
Has, with some several powers allied with him,

Raised such a Force as threatens to destroy
What little life the Father left in Thebes,
And either to reconquer and there reign,
Or raze our sacred ramparts to the dust.
And on that second count I ask again—
Whether, if that wing'd Victory do indeed
Abide with him, he be not doubly bound,
By now submission to his country's will
To counter-expiate his son's revolt,
While for past wrong atoning for himself?
And furthermore I ask, would it beseem
A King and People wise and just as this,
If not with Thebes confederate, not her Foe,
Who, disregarding as I know you do,
All visionary profit for yourselves,
Would not escape that censure in men's eyes,
Withholding—nay, before those jealous eyes
Upholding—one who, for his sake—still more
For hers who innocently shares the shame—
Were better in the bosom of his own
To veil the remnant of a life defaced
If not by Crime—yet by Calamity
So crime-akin—so terrible—twofold—
Of Parricide and—

*Œd.* Shameless villain, hold!

Who in the compass of this brief appeal
Before these reverend Elders and their King,
Dare show the double face and double tongue
For which of old you were notorious:
First with fair honey-sweet cajoling words
Seeking to entice; and, when the honey fail'd,
Intimidating with unsheathed sting,
As impotent to wound as that to win.

Intimidate, I say—not me alone,
But this great People and their Sovereign,
Who dare, forsooth, who dare between us stand
With talk—O not of Crime forsooth—but of
Calamity so crime-like—'twas the word—
So cunningly confused, that when at first
You came, propitiation on your tongue,
The word of pity floated on the top,
But when that fail'd, then Crime came uppermost,
And Crime left ringing in this people's ears.
Lest which—albeit but empty breath, I know, sound
To good King Theseus, and his Councillors,
But with the Citizens, less well advised,
Ring out the old alarm that shall again—
And let it!—rouse the cry of baffled Thebes,
I will arrest, and from denial false,
Or the less guilty silence of consent,
Convict you once for all, and let you go.
Was't not predicted, ev'n before my birth,
By Phœbus, Fate's unerring Oracle,
That I should slay my father? And the God
Provided for his own accomplishment,
Ev'n by the very means that father took
To wrench out of my hands his destiny,
As old Kithæron wots of to this hour.
For Fate, that was not to be baffled thus,
And Phœbus, that was not to be forsworn,
There found and rear'd me till my arm was strong
To do the execution they fore-doom'd.
Yea, on the very road King Laius
Again was going to that Oracle
He fondly dream'd—as afterward his son
More vainly bragg'd—of having foil'd before,

I met—I smote—I slew—my Father—yes—
And you, before this presence, answer me!
If one you knew not save that King he were,
Upon the public thoroughfare of men
Had struck you, no less royal than himself;
Would you, sedate and pious as you are,
In youth and courage strong as I was then—
Would you have paused to think whether, in all
The roll of human possibility
The man who smote you might not in his veins
Have running blood akin to that in yours,
Or, in the sudden wrath of self-defence,
Retaliated with a counter-blow?
Yea! as the very Father whom I slew,
Could his voice reach us though the earth between,
Would ev'n now bear me witness, as he shall
When I rejoin him in the world below;
That, howsoever for the world's behoof,
The Gods, albeit with pitying eyes from heaven,
Chastise the guiltless instruments of crime
For which they know that Fate is chargeable,
They look not with a like compassion down
Upon those mortal agents of their doom
Who, with a vengeance more implacable,
Pursue and persecute—ay, let it be
The Parricide!—The Parricide!—
And for that yet more terrible mischance
That follow'd—and for which yourselves in Thebes
Were, under Destiny, responsible—
All shameless as thou art, art not ashamed
Before an alien People and their King
To breathe—as breathe thou wert about to do
Had not I swept it from thy lips unsaid

The Word whihch not myself alone involves,
But one—whose Memory *Thou* least of all
Shouldst have untomb'd—involves, I say, in that
Which unaware to have done is less shame
Than with aforethought malice to proclaim!

*Cho.* If to King Creon Reason heretofore
Seem'd choked in wrath, 'tis not to wonder now
That, with this burst of Fury overwhelm'd,
He leaves in silence Theseus to reply.

*Thes.* Albeit on either side appeal'd to now,
And whichsoever way myself inclined,
I shall not from my former purpose swerve;
To stand as Witness, not as Arbiter,
Between two Princes of an alien land,
Whereof one yet is Ruler, and though fall'n
From rule the other, still a King to me.
To whom, first coming to the land I rule,
I pledged an oath by those Eumenides
Beside whose sanctuary e'en now we stand,
That if Persuasion and fair Argument
Should fail with him,—as fail'd it has, you see,
Nor less with her, who, wedded to his fate,
Clings all the closer to her father's side—
No power but Heav'n's should move him from my land.
And therefore, heedless what the world may say,
Well knowing that my hospitality
To no remoter self-advantage looks,
I should not—even if not engaged by oath—
I should not from my plighted promise swerve.

*Cre.* I may not, were I minded—I, with these
Few followers—in the teeth of Athens arm'd,
Arraign the adverse judgment of their King;
But to the courteous welcome I have met,

Reciprocating with a like farewell,
Must to my people leave on my return
How minded, and how temper'd, to receive
This unforeseen denial of their right.

*Thes.* That you shall settle with your friends at home;
And in what temper and to what result
Among yourselves decided and declared,
Thebes shall not find our Athens unprepared.

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CHORUS.

*Strophe* 1.

Were I where the dauntless train
Swells the battle's brazen roar;
On the hallow'd Pythian plain;
Or the torch-illumined shore,
Where for men their holy flame
O'er the sacred Mysteries wakes,
And 'mongst Priests of honour'd name
Where his station Silence takes,
Wont his golden key to bear
In his firm tongue-locking hand!
There the warrior Theseus, there
Join'd the virgin sisters stand;
There they shall soon the conflict share,
And pour the torrent rage of war.

*Antistrophe* 1.

Westward haply on the plain,
Where the white and rocky steep
Tow'rs o'er Oia's rich domain,
May th' ensanguined battle sweep:
Where impetuous in their speed,
Glowing with the flames of war,
Warriors spur the foaming steed,
Other warriors roll the car.
Brave the youths who here reside,

Brave th' Athenian troops in fight;
Shine their reins with martial pride,
All their trappings glitter bright;
These honours in their rich array
To Pallas all and Neptune pay.

*Strophe* 2.

Is the dreadful work begun?
Or does ought their force delay?
O let me give the glad presages way!
Soon shall yon bright ethereal sun
Behold him, vaunting now no more,
Compell'd th' afflicted virgin to restore,
Afflicted through her father's woes.
Each day some deed effected shows,
The ruling hand of righteous Jove.
I am the prophet of a prosperous fight.
Had I the pennons of a dove
High o'er the clouds to whirl my flight,
Then should my raptured eyes behold
The victory my thoughts foretold.

*Antistrophe* 2.

Thou in heav'n's high throne adored,
Sovereign of the gods above,
Give strength, O pow'rful all-beholding Jove,
Give conquest to my country's lord;
With glory mark his purple way,
And make the ambush'd foe an easy prey!
Pallas, propitious hear my pray'r,
And show that Athens is thy care!
Thee, Hunter Phœbus, skill'd to trace
The sylvan savage in his rapid flight;
Thee, whom the pleasures in the chase
Of the fleet, spotted hind delight,
Thee I implore, chaste Huntress Maid,
Aid her brave sons, our country aid!

ŒDIPUS, ANTIGONE, MESSENGER, CHORUS.

*Mes.* Where is King Œdipus?
*Cho.* Behold him here.
*Mes.* King Œdipus, Theseus, of Athens King,
Hath sent me back with this report full speed:
That Creon with a cloud of armèd men
Whom we found ambush'd on a neighbouring height,
Without encounter, but with lowering brows,
And muttered thunder of Revenge to come,
Broke up and blew away the way they came.
*Œd.* The Gods be praised, and Theseus blest withal!
*Mes.* Who bids me tell you further what myself
Did also witness; that, as we returned,
Before Poseidon's Altar by the way,
Whereat we stay'd to sacrifice and pray,
A strange man, as with distant travel worn,
And low beneath a load of sorrow bow'd,
By that same Altar they both worshipped at
Besought a boon of Theseus; and, when askt
His country, name, and parentage replied,
From Argos—
*Œd.* Argos!
*Mes.* But himself, he said,
The Son of Œdipus, once King of Thebes,
Whom, ere he went to conquer and retrieve
By arms the throne usurped from both in Thebes,
With many tears King Theseus he besought
To see, perchance before he went to die:
And Theseus, moved by pity for the man,
And reverence for the shrine by which he pray'd—
*Œd.* I will not see him!
*Cho.* Nay, consider yet;

As by the sacred earth you stand beside
From Theseus welcome for yourself you found,
So by the shrine at which with Theseus pray'd
Your son, refuse not what to Creon granted
Of hearing and reply.

*Mes.* So pray'd the King.

*Ant.* Oh, Father, young and maiden as I am,
Unfit to lift my voice among these men,
Yet hear me—if not for my brother's sake,
May be less guilty than you now believe,
Or if yet guilty, not impenitent,
Who comes to plead forgiveness at your feet—
If not for his sake, Father, yet for mine—
Let me but see my brother's face once more,
And hear his voice, before he goes to die.

*Œd.* You know not what you ask, Antigone;
But thus by Theseus at the altar's side
Entreated, let what has to be be done,
And leave me to such peace as may be mine.

*Cho.* And yonder, lo! the solitary man
Comes slowly weeping hither.

*Ant.* Oh, my brother!

*Cho.* Approach, unhappy man, approach, and plead
Your sorrows, and, as you deserve, succeed.

Polynices, Œdipus, Antigone, Chorus.

*Pol.* Appeal! Alas, how scarcely dare approach,
Who scarce aloof dare contemplate through tears
That Vision of paternal majesty,
Or his misfortune like my own deplore!
Beholding him an outcast like myself,
In sorry raiment—travel-torn as mine—
With that bow'd head, those tangled locks that fall

O'er the benighted temple of his brows;
And her, who, like my father, loved me once,
And even now whose falling tears confess
That ev'n the eternal love she bears to him
Hath not yet quencht the Sister in her heart—
Oh, wretched, and part-guilty as I am,
Albeit the judgment on yourself you brought,
Of living worse than death that Thebes might live,
Had I but known—but heard—much more had seen,
What now I see, and know, had never been;
Never had been—much less so long endured,
And shall no longer, now I witness, be,
Despite of those who drown'd my single voice,
As now their treason has confounded me.

No word? No sign? revolted from me still?—
For, were I guilty as you guilty deem,
Yet not so guilty as Eteocles,
Who proves himself arch-criminal tow'rd you
By after treason to your elder-born,
Seizing the Throne which, if you leave, devolves
Upon your first-born second self in me.
This hath Eteocles, my Brother, done,
By subornation of the Citizens,
With the connivance of the subtle Creon,
Who spins his web within the City walls
To catch the Sons, their Father as he caught,
Involving us in that unnatural strife
By which he purposes, when rid of one,
To rule the other; or, destroying both,
Himself in title as in deed to reign.
Thus me, who least came easy to his hand,
Hath he like you driv'n out, like you to seek

And find a country and a home elsewhere;
You, on this hospitable soil, with this
Great Sovereign and his generous People here;
Whom, without asking further service from,
Nor wishing to dissever from your side,
Unless by restoration to your own
To sweeten separation from themselves,
I do implore you, Father, were it but
With one relenting gesture of the hand,
One speechless inclination of the head,
Vouchsafe your wretched son some dawning sign
Of that forgiveness, wherewith fully arm'd,
I may for more than past misdeed atone,
By vengeance upon those who wrong us both.
For when, so foully by those two betray'd,
I fled to Argos, King Adrastus there
Gave me not only welcome when I came,
But after, when possess'd of all my wrongs,
His daughter's hand in wedlock; and with that,
By way of dowry, such an Host in Arms,
As, with the favour of the Gods, which your
Forgiveness, oh my Father! shall secure,
Shall Thebes recover, and re-throne us both.
For look! for us a seven-fold Armament
By seven such Champions headed and array'd
As yet the world has not together seen,
Leagued in our cause; Amphiaraus first,
For Divination famous as for Arms,
Knowing the issue of the War he joins;
Ætolian Tydeus next; and next to him
Eteoclus of Argos; and the fourth,
Hippomedon: then Capaneus, who boasts
Of bringing down the walls of Thebes by Fire:

Parthenopæus next of Arcady,
So from his mother Atalanta named:
And seventh, and last, myself, your elder-born,
And right successor to your dynasty.
With sev'n such Champions, and with such an Host,
One need we yet to consecrate our arms
And triumph in the cause which is your own.
Wherefore, repenting what unfilial wrong,
By others wrought on, I have done to you,
Hither on foot from Argos am I come,
A contrite suppliant at my Father's feet;
Imploring him, by all those Household Gods
Whose statues are before our palace door—
Yea, by the faithful men within the walls,
Who, to a statue-like inaction cow'd,
Stand mutely wondering for their absent lord—
And for her sake who, having shared so long
Your sorrow, now your triumph shall partake—
Remit your righteous wrath against a son,
Who, tow'rd you guilty as he may have been,
And all distasteful in your eyes as now,
Shall now for more than past misdeed atone,
Or, in just retribution failing, fall.

(*After a long pause.*)

*Œd.* Hath this man said all he came charged to say?

*Cho.* So from the unruffled silence into which
His words have fall'n and vanish'd I conceive.

*Œd.* But that the Sovereign Ruler of this Land
Had sent this man to me, and thought it well
That I should hear and answer, hear I might,
But not a word of answer from my lips:
No, nor a sign, save with averted face,

And one blind warning of the hand—"Begone!"
But thus entreated, by the word of one
Whose word should be the law of Love to me,
And of the friendly Council here beside,
I will not only hear, but will reply—
Such a reply as he that asks for it
Shall wish he had not come so far to hear.
Who—Wretch!—who when thou hadst the sovereign power,
Which now thy Brother to himself usurps,
Then—not cajoled nor forced, as you pretend—
For was not I, the Victim, Witness too?—
But, one with them, didst set the rabble on
To hoot me forth to shame and beggary;
Yea, when, not like yourselves implacable,
The God allow'd and I besought return,
Still shut me out, and, but to serve your ends,
Still would have let me linger till I died
In a strange country, and in such a plight
As now, forsooth, you weep to look upon!
Thou hypocrite! with those pretended tears
Of false contrition, which, were't true, too late,
Think'st to cajole me with a show of Love—
Ay, of such Love wherewith a man regards
The tool he needs to work his purpose with,
And forthwith fling regardlessly away,
Laying on those the load of infamy
Thou sharèdst with them of the royal spoil
They stole from me, and now, like other thieves,
Would keep between themselves, outwitting thee,
Who, them outwitting, to thyself wouldst keep?
Oh Fool as Hypocrite! suspecting not
How that most cunning rogue of all the three
Has been before you, and the mask you wear,

But that, behind it playing such a part,
In his mid passion he was forced to drop,
And, as he fled discomfited away,
Left you to wear, and to a like result.
Fools both, as Hypocrites! suspecting not
That he you would deceive your errand knows,
Each to win back the stolen stakes you lost—
The Kingdom once without the King, but now
The King himself to bring the Kingdom back;
Who, flung before as offal from your walls,
Is now become a treasure of such price
As each of you would fain get home again,
Like stolen treasure—to be buried there.
You see I know your errand: if you fail
To guess my answer—
One way lies Argos, and another Thebes,
Which those tired feet might fail to reach in time;
But could you borrow Hermes' feather'd heel
Might catch your Rival ere the Sun goes down,
And from his lip learn all. If not from him,
Then somewhat later, from your brother there,
When you shall meet him, arm to arm, in arms,
Under the wall where you would bury me.
Then might you tell him in return, were not
The story swallow'd up enacting it,
How, as he speaks, your living Father's Ghost
Foresees you both, up-looking from the tomb
In which your hopes of conquest die with him,
You, not the Champion leading, lance-erect,
Your Argive Host to sack your native Thebes;
Nor him within it in mock majesty
Posting his people to defend the Gates:
Not thus, but in your golden feathers both,

Where one another challenging you stood,
Stretch'd in the dust, slain by each other's hand.
This, standing on the consecrated ground
Of those avenging Sisters underneath
Who hear, and even as I speak prepare
To do their destined work, I prophesy;
You never to reconquer or regain
The Kingdom lost where he shall never reign;
But ev'n before the walls that you contest,
Die, slaying him by whom yourself are slain!

*Cho.* Terrible words from human lip to hear!
And by what witness from what other world
Attested, as methought heard once before,
While this man spoke, and heav'n and earth look'd clear!

*Ant.* Alas! Alas! for my belovéd Brother!

*Pol.* Ay, and Alas! not for myself alone,
But for all those arm'd in my cause, Alas!
To whom returning I may not reveal
The doom of death to me, to them defeat!

*Ant.* O then by all you worship, and hold dear,
Return to Argos not; or, if return,
Revealing that you carry back with you,
Revolt them from your fatal Enterprise,
And, leaving graceless Thebes to go her way,
With those you loved, and you are loved by, live!

*Pol.* Love me they would no more, Antigone,
If, having roused them at the trumpet's sound
To arms, both Men and Champions, in my cause,
Then to dissuade them, if dissuade I could,
By rumour of uncertain Prophecies,
And Malediction that to them would seem
But empty raving of impotent wrath.
Or, ev'n would they retreat, as will they not,

Could I endure in Argos to survive
My younger brother's laughing-stock in Thebes?
*Ant.* Oh, better that than this unnatural war,
Which cannot end, which cannot end, I know,
But with the fatal consequence that leads
Or haunts my Father's footsteps where he goes!
While the false Creon, who has set you on,
Shall mock you both, who die that he may win!
*Pol.* Too late, too late, Antigone, too late!
And when that comes which is foredoom'd, and I
Lie stark and cold before the walls of Thebes,
With him whom slaying I am doom'd to die,
Shall not one pious hand, Antigone,
Protect your lifeless brother from the dog
With some few handfuls of his Mother Earth?
*Ant.* Oh, but it shall not need! You shall not go!
If not for Love, in Pity, for you both,
My Father shall relent!
*Pol.* But Fate shall not.
*Œd.* No, by that other roll of thunder, no!
*Cho.* Again! Yet not a cloud in Heav'n above—
*Œd.* These are no thunders from the hand of Zeus,
But the dark Ruler of the World below,
Reverberating from the vault of Heav'n—
Shall some one here go straightway to your King,
And bid him, whatsoever busied with—
Yea, were it by the Altar worshipping,
Forthwith unworshipp'd leave it; for the God
Who links the Fate of Athens with mine own,
By those three thunders hence has summon'd me.
Gather no dust upon the feet of him
Who goes this errand: for the God, I know,
Who, brandishing aloft his Oracles

Accomplish'd, in one compass of the sky
From my meridian drove me to my fall,
And, as himself he sank behind the Night,
Into the hands of those who therein rule
My destiny resign'd—the God, I say,
Whose rising found me here, with his descent
Shall take me down with him, and leave me there.

CHORUS.

Strange things hath this day witness'd and heard tell
  By the strange man whom Phœbus from the stream
  Of Ocean rising with his levell'd beam
Surprised, as with a cloud of Oracle
  Encompass'd, in the consecrated shade
Of those who underneath more darkly dwell,
Whose more propitious name scarce daring we
To whisper, he—seemingly not unheard—
  No, nor unanswer'd—calls on undismay'd.
Strange things—and if the word of presage hold,
  Not unattested by those thunders three,
Yet stranger are we likely to behold,
  Prophetical of Evil if to some,
To Athens, and her People and her Kings,
  Auspicious all, and for all time to come.

THESEUS, ŒDIPUS, ANTIGONE, CHORUS.

*Thes.* Look, at your bidding, Œdipus, once more
I come, prepared to do as I have done
Of hospitable service all I may.
*Œd.* Yea, once more, Theseus, and for one last time,
Before the God recalls me to himself,
Have I recall'd you, to solicit nought,

But the good service of a single day,
Which, were life longer, were, I know, life-long,
With Death's eternal blessing to repay:
Which when I prophesied as soon to be,
Not knowing then how soon; but knowing now.

*Thes.* By what assurance, Œdipus?

*Œd.* By those
Three subterranean thunders summon'd hence.

*Thes.* From Athens?

*Œd.* From the eyes of Athens, ay;
And yet nowhither else: a mystery
Whose peremptory resolution
The God who loves you but for you delays.

*Thes.* I must believe that one whom destiny
Hath step by step oracularly led,
Reads and interprets right the wondrous Signs
Which others but attest and wonder at.

*Œd.* And for a further witness and a last—
Blind as I am, and hitherto so long
Compell'd to find my way with others' eyes,
Myself shall those who led me forthwith lead
Along the road where that shall have to be
Which other eyes than Theseus' none may see.
Which having seen, King Theseus, in your heart
Keep unreveal'd; and when you come to die,
To him alone who after you the Throne
Of Athens mounts reveal it; he in turn
To him who him shall follow; and so forth,
From hand to hand, until the end of Time:
Not trusting that into the People's hand,
Who, loyal, wise, and pious, let them be,
Seducible by those seditious few
That still infest the soundest Commonweal,

Abuse the power committed to their hands,
And by disorder and revolt at home
Lay bare your bosom to the foe without.
And now the Powers to you and yours Benign,
Who thrice have call'd me from the world below,
Now that the word of vantage in your heart
Is register'd, will brook no more delay,
And the mute Hermes of the lower world,
Ev'n as I speak, prepares to lead the way.

CHORUS.

*Strophe.*

If I may thee, infernal Queen,
Thou gloomy pow'r by mortal eyes unseen,
With holy awe revere;
And thee, stern Monarch, whose terrific sway
The dreary realms of night obey,
Hear Pluto, Pluto hear!
Let not pangs of tort'ring pow'r
Rack the stranger's dying hour,
While the cheerless path he treads
To the Stygian house that leads.——
Guiltless thou wast doom'd to know
Various ills and bitter woe:
May the god with just regard
Grace thee with a bright reward!

*Antistrophe.*

Ye awful pow'rs, from realms of night
Who vengeful rise the guilty to affright!
And thou, grim Dog of Hell,
Before the iron gates of Pluto spread
Enormous on thy horrid bed,
With many a hideous yell
Whilst thy echoing cave resounds,
Guarding fierce those dismal bounds;

Thou, whom Earth to Tartarus bore,
Cease, oh cease thy dreaded roar;
Gentle meet him in those glades;
When he joins the silent shades;
Ever wakeful, cease t'appal;
Dog of Hell on thee I call!

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MESSENGER, CHORUS.

*Mes.* O citizens of Athens, to sum up
In fewest words what, to be told at large,
Would need an apter tongue than mine to tell—
King Œdipus—
*Cho.* Is dead—
*Mes.* I say not that;
From human eyes departed, I will say;
And with such circumstance as, could I tell
All that myself I saw, who saw not all—
*Cho.* But, if not all, yet what you saw, recount.
*Mes.* How the blind King, by what interior light
Guided himself we know not, guided us,
You that were present witness for yourselves;
And how with Theseus and the woeful Maid
Beside him, and some wondering few behind,
Straightforward, with unhesitating step,
That needed not his staff to feel the way,
Led on; till, reach'd the threshold of the road
Which leads, they say, down to the nether world,
Beside the monumental stone that marks
Where our King Theseus and Peirithous,
After long warfare, plighted hands of peace,
He stopp'd, sat down, his tatter'd raiment loosed,
And bade his daughter from the running brook

Bring him wherewith himself to purify.
Which she, resorting to the nearest field
Of Ceres, with what decent haste she might,
Return'd, and wash'd him, and in raiment clean
Reclothed, as to the rite of Burial due.
And when all this was done, as for the Dead,
Weeping himself, he folded in his arms
His weeping child, and told her, from that hour,
She that so long had suffer'd for his sake,
With but the love between them to requite,
The face of him she loved must see no more.
And so they wept together for a while,
Together folded in each other's arms,
And all was silent else; when suddenly,
A thunder-speaking voice, as from the jaws
Of earth that yawn'd beneath us, call'd aloud:
"Ho! Thou there! Why so long a-coming? Come!"
Then Œdipus, who knew the word, and whence,
Relax'd his folding arms, and, rising up,
Took Theseus' hand, and, in it laying hers,
Besought him never to desert the child,
Nor yield her up to any against her will,
But be to her the Father whom she lost.
To which King Theseus having pledged his word,
The other, folding in one last embrace,
With one last kiss, his daughter to his heart,
Bade her return with us and never once
Look back on what was not for any one
But for King Theseus and himself to know.
Which said, and all in awful wonder hush'd,
The weeping Daughter turn'd away with us,
Slowly, like those who leave a funeral pyre,
With us our way re-tracing; until I,

Seized with a longing I could not control,
Despite the word yet ringing in my ears,
Look'd back—and saw King Theseus standing there,
Stock-still, his hands before his eyes, like one
Smit with a sudden blaze: but Œdipus
There—anywhere—there was not—vanish'd—gone—
But, whether by some flash from Heav'n despatch'd,
Or by His hand who through the shatter'd Earth
Had summon'd him in thunder, drawn below,
No living man but Theseus' self may know.

---

CHORUS.

Let not the Man by Man be deem'd unblest,
  Who, howsoever in the midnight gloom
  Encompass'd of inexorable Doom
That shrouds him from his Zenith to the West,
  Not till he sink below the Verge redeems
  His unexpected Lustre in such beams
As reaching Heav'n-aloft enshrine his Tomb.

(*or as follows*)

Strange Destinies of Man! But in the range
Of Destiny recorded none more strange
  Than his, who, from his Sovereign Glory hurl'd
Among strange men a Spectacle became
  Of Horror and Reproach about the World:

Till by the * hand
That drove him forth and forward to the land
  Of sacred Athens led, he did repay
  The hospitable Welcome of one day

* Left blank in MS.

With such Farewell of Welfare as on those
Who serve him some departing God bestows,
  His tutelary care bequeathing—yea,
  Himself bequeathing albeit pass'd away.

Nor let the Man by Man be deem'd unblest
  Who, howsoever in the midnight gloom
  Eclipsed of some inexorable Doom
That shrouds him from his Zenith to the West,
  Not till he sinks below the Earth redeems
  His unextinguish'd lustre in such beams
As rising Zenith-high enshrine his Tomb.

# AGAMEMNON,

A TRAGEDY

TAKEN FROM

ÆSCHYLUS.

This Version—or Per-version—of Æschylus was originally printed to be given away among Friends, who either knew nothing of the Original, or would be disposed to excuse the liberties taken with it by an unworthy hand.

# PREFACE.

All the Choruses in this Tragedy call for a more lyrical Interpreter than myself. But even I might have done better with the first, by mingling fragments of the so oft-told Story with such dark and ill-ominous presage as would accumulate as Time went on.

So much for the matter. As for the manner; I think that some such form as Tennyson has originated in his version of the Battle of Brunanburh might well be adopted in this case, as in many other of Æschylus' Choruses—such as in the Persæ, the Seven against Thebes, and the Eumenides—the question being whether such a trochaic gallop may not over-ride the Iambic Blank Verse Dialogue that follows it.

I suppose that a literal version of this play, if possible, would scarce be intelligible. Even were the dialogue always clear, the lyric Choruses, which make up so large a part, are so dark and abrupt in themselves, and therefore so much the more mangled and tormented by copyist and commentator, that the most conscientious translator must not only jump at a meaning, but must bridge over a chasm; especially if he determine to complete the antiphony of Strophe and Antistrophe in English verse.

Thus, encumbered with forms which sometimes, I think, hang heavy on Æschylus himself*; struggling with indistinct meanings, obscure allusions, and even with *puns* which some have tried to reproduce in English; this grand play, which to the scholar and the poet, lives, breathes, and moves in the dead language, has hitherto seemed to me to drag and stifle under conscientious translation into the living; that is to say, to have lost that which I think the drama can least afford to lose all the world over. And so it was that, hopeless of succeeding where as good versifiers, and better scholars, seemed to me to have failed, I came first to break the bounds of Greek Tragedy; then to swerve from the Master's footsteps; and so, one license drawing on another to make all of a piece, arrived at the present anomalous conclusion. If it has succeeded in shaping itself into a distinct, consistent, and animated Whole, through which the reader can follow without halting, and not without accelerating interest from beginning to end, he will perhaps excuse my acknowledged transgressions, and will not disdain the Jade that has carried him so far so well till he find himself mounted on a Thorough-bred whose thunder-clothed neck and long-resounding pace shall better keep up with the Original.

For to re-create the Tragedy, body and soul, into English, and make the Poet free of the language which reigns over that half of the world never dreamt of in his philosophy, must be reserved—especially the Lyric part—for some Poet, worthy of that name, and of congenial Genius with the Greek. Would that every one such would devote himself to one such work! whether by Translation, Paraphrase, or

* For instance, the long antiphonal dialogue of the Chorus debating what to do—or whether do anything—after hearing their master twice cry out (in pure Iambics also) that he is murdered.

Metaphrase, to use Dryden's definition, whose Alexander's Feast, and some fragments of whose Plays, indicate that he, perhaps, might have rendered such a service to Æschylus and to us. Or, to go further back in our own Drama, one thinks what Marlowe might have done; himself a translator from the Greek; something akin to Æschylus in his genius; still more in his grandiose, and sometimes *authadostomous* verse; of which some lines relating to this very play fall so little short of Greek, that I shall but shame my own by quoting them before hand;

> "Is this the face that launch'd a thousand ships,
> And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?
> Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss!"

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

| | |
|---|---|
| AGAMEMNON, | *King of Argos.* |
| CLYTEMNESTRA, | *his Queen.* |
| ÆGISTHUS, | *his Cousin.* |
| CASSANDRA, | *Daughter of King* PRIAM. |
| HERALD. | |

CHORUS *of ancient Councillors.*

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*The scene is at* ARGOS.

# AGAMEMNON.

[AGAMEMNON'S *Palace: a Warder on the Battlements.*]

WARDER.

[Once more, once more, and once again once more]
I crave the Gods' compassion, and release
From this inexorable watch, that now
For one whole year, close as a couching dog,
On Agamemnon's housetop I have kept,
Contemplating the muster of the stars,
And those transplendent Dynasties of Heav'n*
That, as alternately they rise and fall,
Draw Warmth and Winter over mortal man.
Thus, and thus long, I say, at the behest
Of the man-minded Woman who here rules,
Here have I watch'd till yonder mountain-top
Shall kindle with a signal-light from Troy.

* The commentators generally understand these λαμπρὸνς δυνάστας to mean Sun and Moon. Blomfield, I believe, admits they may be the Constellations by which the seasons were anciently marked, as in the case of the Pleiades further on in the Play. The Moon, I suppose, had no part to play in such a computation; and, as for the Sun, the beacon-fire surely implies a night-watch.

And watch'd in vain, couch'd on the barren stone,
Night after night, night after night, alone,
Ev'n by a wandering dream unvisited,
To which the terror of my post denies
The customary passage of closed eyes.
From which, when haply nodding, I would scare
Forbidden sleep, or charm long night away
With some old ballad of the good old times,
The foolish song falls presently to tears,
Remembering the glories of this House,
Where all is not as all was wont to be,—
No, nor as should—Alas, these royal walls,
Had they but tongue (as ears and eyes, men say)
Would tell strange stories!—But, for fear they should,
Mine shall be mute as they are. Only this—
And this no treason surely—might I but,
But once more might I, see my lord again
Safe home! But once more look upon his face!
But once more take his hand in mine!—
Hilloa!
The words scarce from my lips.—Have the Gods heard?
Or am I dreaming wide awake? as wide
Awake I am—The Light! The Light! The Light
Long look'd for, long despair'd of, on the Height!
Oh more to me than all the stars of night!
More than the Morning-star!—more than the Sun
Who breaks my nightly watch, this rising one
Which tells me that my year-long night is done!
When, shaking off the collar of my watch,
I first to Clytemnestra shall report
Such news as, if indeed a lucky cast
For her and Argos, sure a Main to me!
But grant the Gods, to all! A master-cast,

More than compensating all losses past;
And lighting up our altars with a fire
Of Victory that never shall expire!

[*Exit Warder. Daylight gradually dawns, and enter slowly Chorus.*

CHORUS.

I.

Another rising of the sun
That rolls another year away,
Sees us through the portal dun
Dividing night and day
Like to phantoms from the crypt
Of Morpheus or of Hades slipt,
Through the sleeping city creeping,
Murmuring an ancient song
Of unvindicated wrong,
Ten year told as ten year long.
Since to revenge the great abuse
To Themis done by Priam's son,
The Brother-Princes that, co-heir
Of Atreus, share his royal chair,
And from the authentic hand of Zeus
His delegated sceptre bear,
Startled Greece with such a cry
For Vengeance as a plunder'd pair
Of Eagles over their aerial lair
Screaming, to whirlpool lash the waves of air.

II.

The Robber, blinded in his own conceit,
Must needs think Retribution deaf and blind.

Fool! not to know what tongue was in the wind,
When Tellus shudder'd under flying feet,
When stricken Ocean under alien wings;
Was there no Phœbus to denounce the flight
From Heav'n? Nor those ten thousand Eyes of Night?
And, were no other eye nor ear of man
Or God awake, yet universal Pan,
For ever watching at the heart of things,
And Zeus, the Warden of domestic Right,
And the perennial sanctity of Kings,
Let loose the Fury who, though late
Retarded in the leash of Fate,
Once loosed, after the Sinner springs;
Over Ocean's heights and hollows,
Into cave and forest follows,
Into fastest guarded town,
Close on the Sinner's heel insists,
And, turn or baffle as he lists,
Dogs him inexorably down.

III.

Therefore to revenge the debt
To violated Justice due,
Armèd Hellas hand in hand
The iron toils of Ares drew
Over water, over land,
Over such a tract of years;
Draught of blood abroad, of tears
At home, and unexhausted yet:
All the manhood Greece could muster,
And her hollow ships enclose;
All that Troy from her capacious
Bosom pouring forth oppose;

By the ships, beneath the wall,
And about the sandy plain,
Armour-glancing files advancing,
Fighting, flying, slaying, slain:
And among them, and above them,
Crested Heroes, twain by twain,
Lance to lance, and thrust to thrust,
Front erect, and, in a moment,
One or other roll'd in dust.
Till the better blood of Argos
Soaking in the Trojan sand,
In her silent half dispeopled
Cities, more than half unmann'd,
Little more of man to meet
Than the helpless child, or hoary
Spectre of his second childhood,
Tottering on triple feet,
Like the idle waifs and strays
Blown together from the ways
Up and down the windy street.

IV.

But thus it is; All bides the destined Hour;
And Man, albeit with Justice at his side,
Fights in the dark against a secret Power
Not to be conquer'd—and how pacified?

V.

For, before the Navy flush'd
Wing from shore, or lifted oar
To foam the purple brush'd;
While about the altar hush'd

Throng'd the ranks of Greece thick-fold,
Ancient Chalcas in the bleeding
Volume of the Future reading
Evil things foresaw, foretold:
That, to revenge some old disgrace
Befall'n her sylvan train,
Some dumb familiar of the Chace
By Menelaus slain,
The Goddess Artemis would vex
The fleet of Greece with storms and checks:
That Troy should not be reach'd at all;
Or—as the Gods themselves divide
In Heav'n to either mortal side—
If ever reach'd, should never fall—
Unless at such a loss and cost
As counterpoises Won and Lost.

VI.

The Elder of the Royal Twain
Listen'd in silence, daring not arraign
Ill omen, or rebuke the raven lips:
Then taking up the tangled skein
Of Fate, he pointed to the ships;
He sprang aboard: he gave the sign;
And blazing in his golden arms ahead,
Drew the long Navy in a glittering line
After him like a meteor o'er the main.

VII.

So from Argos forth: and so
O'er the rolling waters they,
Till in the roaring To-and-fro
Of rock-lockt Aulis brought to stay:

There the Goddess had them fast:
With a bitter northern blast
Blew ahead and block'd the way:
Day by day delay; to ship
And tackle damage and decay;
Day by day to Prince and People
Indignation and dismay.
"All the while that in the ribb'd
"Bosom of their vessels cribb'd,
"Tower-crown'd Troy above the waters
"Yonder, quaffing from the horn
"Of Plenty, laughing them to scorn"—
So would one to other say;
And man and chief in rage and grief
Fretted and consumed away.

VIII.

Then to Sacrifice anew:
And again within the bleeding
Volume of the Future reading,
Once again the summon'd Seer
Evil, Evil, still fore-drew.
Day by day, delay, decay
To ship and tackle, chief and crew:
And but one way—one only way to appease
The Goddess, and the wind of wrath subdue;
One way of cure so worse than the disease,
As, but to hear propound,
The Atreidæ struck their sceptres to the ground.

IX.

After a death-deep pause,
The Lord of man and armament his voice
Lifted into the silence—"Terrible choice!
"To base imprisonment of wind and flood
"Whether consign and sacrifice the band
"Of heroes gathered in my name and cause;
"Or thence redeem them by a daughter's blood—
"A daughter's blood shed by a father's hand;
"Shed by a father's hand, and to atone
"The guilt of One—who, could the God endure
"Propitiation by the Life impure,
"Should wash out her transgression with her own."

X.

But, breaking on that iron multitude,
The Father's cry no kindred echo woke:
And in the sullen silence that ensued
An unrelenting iron answer spoke.

XI.

At last his neck to that unnatural yoke
He bow'd: his hand to that unnatural stroke:
With growing purpose, obstinate as the wind
That block'd his fleet, so block'd his better mind,
To all the Father's heart within him blind—
For thus it fares with men; the seed
Of Evil, sown by seeming Need,
Grows, self-infatuation-nurst,
From evil Thought to evil Deed,
Incomprehensible at first,
And to the end of Life accurst.

XII.

And thus, the blood of that one innocent
Weigh'd light against one great accomplishment,
At last—at last—in the meridian blaze
Of Day, with all the Gods in Heaven agaze,
And armed Greece below—he came to dare—
After due preparation, pomp, and prayer,
He came—the wretched father—came to dare—
  Himself—with sacrificial knife in hand,—
  Before the sacrificial altar stand,
To which—her sweet lips, sweetly wont to sing
  Before him in the banquet-chamber, gagg'd,
Lest one ill word should mar the impious thing;
Her saffron scarf about her fluttering,
  Dumb as an all-but-speaking picture, dragg'd
Through the remorseless soldiery—
                But soft!—
  While I tell the more than oft-
Told Story, best in silence found,
  Incense-breathing fires aloft
Up into the rising fire,
Into which the stars expire,
  Of Morning mingle; and a sound
As of Rumour at the heel
  Of some great tiding gathers ground;
And from portals that disclose
Before a fragrant air that blows
Them open, what great matter, Sirs,
Thus early Clytemnestra stirs,
Hither through the palace gate
Torch in hand, and step-elate,
Advancing, with the kindled Eyes
As of triumphant Sacrifice?

*Enter* CLYTEMNESTRA.

Oh, Clytemnestra, my obeisance
Salutes your coming footstep, as her right
Who rightly occupies the fellow-chair
Of that now ten years widow'd of its Lord.
But—be it at your pleasure ask'd, as answer'd—
What great occasion, almost ere Night's self
Rekindles into Morning from the Sun,
Has woke your Altar-fire to Sacrifice?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Oh, never yet did Night—
Night of all Good the Mother, as men say,
Conceive a fairer issue than To-day!
Prepare your ear, Old man, for tidings such
As youthful hope would scarce anticipate.

CHORUS.

I have prepared them for such news as such
Preamble argues.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

What if you be told—
Oh mighty sum in one small figure cast!—
That ten-year-toil'd-for Troy is ours at last?

CHORUS.

"If told!"—Once more!—the word escaped our ears,
With many a baffled rumour heretofore
Slipp'd down the wind of wasted Expectation.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Once more then; and with unconditional
Assurance having hit the mark indeed

That Rumour aimed at—Troy, with all the towers
Our burning vengeance leaves aloft, is ours.
Now speak I plainly?

CHORUS.

Oh! to make the tears,
That waited to bear witness in the eye,
Start, to convict our incredulity!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Oh, blest conviction that enriches you
That lose the cause with all the victory!

CHORUS.

Ev'n so. But how yourself convinced before?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

By no less sure a witness than the God.

CHORUS.

What, in a dream?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

I am not one to trust
The vacillating witnesses of Sleep.

CHORUS.

Ay—but as surely undeluded by
The waking Will, that what we strongly *would*
Imaginates?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ay, like a doating girl.

CHORUS.

Oh, Clytemnestra, pardon mere Old Age
That, after so long starving upon Hope,
But slowly brooks his own Accomplishment.
The Ten-year war is done then! Troy is taken!
The Gods have told you, and the Gods tell true—
But—how? and when?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ev'n with the very birth
Of the good Night which mothers this best Day.

CHORUS.

To-day! To-night! but of Night's work in Troy
Who should inform the scarce awaken'd ear
Of Morn in Argos?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Hephaistos, the lame God,
And spriteliest of mortal messengers;
Who, springing from the bed of burning Troy,
Hither, by fore-devised Intelligence
Agreed upon between my Lord and me,
Posted from dedicated Height to Height
The reach of land and sea that lies between.
And, first to catch him and begin the game,
Did Ida fire her forest-pine, and, waving,
Handed him on to that Hermæan steep
Of Lemnos; Lemnos to the summit of
Zeus-consecrated Athos lifted; whence,
As by the giant taken, so despatch'd,
The Torch of Conquest, traversing the wide
Ægæan with a sunbeam-stretching stride,

Struck up the drowsy watchers on Makistos;
Who, flashing back the challenge, flash'd it on
To those who watch'd on the Messapian height.
With whose quick-kindling heather heap'd and fired
The meteor-bearded messenger refresh'd,
Clearing Asopus at a bound, struck fire
From old Kithæron; and, so little tired
As waxing even wanton with the sport,
Over the sleeping water of Gorgopis
Sprung to the Rock of Corinth; thence to the cliffs
Which stare down the Saronic Gulf, that now
Began to shiver in the creeping Dawn;
Whence, for a moment on the neighbouring top
Of Arachnæum lighting, one last bound
Brought him to Agamemnon's battlements.
By such gigantic strides in such a Race
Where First and Last alike are Conquerors,
Posted the travelling Fire, whose Father-light
Ida conceived of burning Troy To-night.

CHORUS.

Woman, your words man-metal ring, and strike
Ev'n from the tuneless fibre of Old Age
Such martial unison as from the lips
Shall break into full Pæan by and by.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ay, think—think—think, old man, and in your soul
As if 'twere mirror'd in your outward eye.
Imagine what wild work a-doing there—
In Troy—to-night—to-day—this moment—how
Harmoniously, as in one vessel meet
Esil and Oil, meet Triumph and Despair,

Sluiced by the sword along the reeking street,
On which the Gods look down from burning air.
Slain, slaying—dying, dead—about the dead
Fighting to die themselves—maidens and wives
Lock'd by the locks, with their barbarian young,
And torn away to slavery and shame
By hands all reeking with their Champion's blood.
Until, with execution weary, we
Fling down our slaughter-satiated swords,
To gorge ourselves on the unfinish'd feasts
Of poor old Priam and his sons; and then,
Roll'd on rich couches never spread for us,
Ev'n now our sleep-besotted foreheads turn
Up to the very Sun that rises here.
Such is the lawful game of those who win
Upon so just a quarrel—so long fought:
Provided always that, with jealous care,
Retaliation wreaking upon those
Who our insulted Gods upon them drew,
We push not Riot to *their* Altar-foot;
Remembering, on whichever mortal side
Engaged, the Gods are Gods in heav'n and earth,
And not to be insulted unavenged.
This let us take to heart, and keep in sight;
Lest, having run victoriously thus far,
And turn'd the very pillar of our race,
Before we reach the long'd-for goal of Home
Nemesis overtake, or trip us up;
Some ere safe shipp'd: or, launch'd upon the foam,
Ere touch'd the threshold of their native shore;
Yea, or that reach'd, the threshold of the door
Of their own home; from whatsoever corner
The jealous Power is ever on the watch

To compass arrogant Prosperity.
These are a woman's words; for men to take,
Or disregarded drop them, as they will;
Enough for me, if having won the stake,
I pray the Gods with us to keep it still.

[*Exit* CLYTEMNESTRA.

CHORUS.

Oh, sacred Night,
From whose unfathomable breast
Creative Order formed and saw
Chaos emerging into Law:
And now, committed with Eternal Right,
Who didst with star-entangled net invest
So close the guilty City as she slept,
That when the deadly fisher came to draw,
Not one of all the guilty fry through crept.

II.

Oh, Nemesis,
Night's daughter! in whose bosoming abyss
Secretly sitting by the Sinner's sleeve,
Thou didst with self-confusion counterweave
His plot; and when the fool his arrow sped,
Thine after-shot didst only not dismiss
Till certain not to miss the guilty head.

III.

Some think the Godhead, couching at his ease
Deep in the purple Heav'ns, serenely sees
Insult the altar of Eternal Right.
Fools! For though Fortune seem to misrequite,

And Retribution for awhile forget;
Sooner or later she reclaims the debt
With usury that triples the amount
Of Nemesis with running Time's account.

IV.

For soon or late sardonic Fate
With Man against himself conspires;
Puts on the mask of his desires:
Up the steps of Time elate
Leads him blinded with his pride,
And gathering as he goes along
The fuel of his suicide:
Until having topp'd the pyre
Which Destiny permits no higher,
Ambition sets himself on fire;
In conflagration like the crime
Conspicuous through the world and time
Down amidst his brazen walls
The accumulated Idol falls
To shapeless ashes; Demigod
Under the vulgar hoof down-trod
Whose neck he trod on; not an eye
To weep his fall, nor lip to sigh
For him a prayer; or, if there were,
No God to listen, or reply.

V.

And as the son his father's guilt may rue;
And, by retort of justice, what the son
Has sinn'd, to ruin on the father run;
So may the many help to pay the due
Of guilt, remotely implicate with one.

And as the tree 'neath which a felon cowers,
With all its branch is blasted by the bolt
Of Justice launch'd from Heav'n at *his* revolt;
Thus with old Priam, with his royal line,
Kindred and people; yea, the very towers
They crouch'd in, built by masonry divine.

VI.

Like a dream through sleep she glided
Through the silent city gate,
By a guilty Hermes guided
On the feather'd feet of Theft;
Leaving between those she left
And those she fled to lighted Discord,
Unextinguishable Hate;
Leaving him whom least she should,
Menelaus brave and good,
Scarce believing in the mutter'd
Rumour, in the worse than utter'd
Omen of the wailing maidens,
Of the shaken hoary head;
Of deserted board and bed.
For the phantom of the lost one
Haunts him in the wonted places;
Hall and Chamber, which he paces
Hither, Thither, listening, looking,
Phantom-like himself alone;
Till he comes to loathe the faces
Of the marble mute Colossi,
Godlike Forms, and half-divine,
Founders of the Royal line,
Who with all unalter'd Quiet
Witness all and make no sign.

But the silence of the chambers,
And the shaken hoary head,
And the voices of the mourning
Women, and of ocean wailing,
Over which with unavailing
Arms he reaches, as to hail
The phantom of a flying sail—
All but answer, Fled! fled! fled!
False! dishonour'd! worse than dead!

VII.

At last the sun goes down along the bay,
And with him drags detested Day.
He sleeps; and, dream-like as she fled, beside
His pillow, Dream indeed, behold! his Bride
Once more in more than bridal beauty stands;
But, ever as he reaches forth his hands,
Slips from them back into the viewless deep,
On those soft silent wings that walk the ways of sleep.

VIII.

Not beside thee in the chamber,
Menelaus, any more;
But with him she fled with, pillow'd
On the summer softly-billow'd
Ocean, into dimple wreathing
Underneath a breeze of amber
Air that, as from Eros breathing,
Fill'd the sail and flew before;
Floating on the summer seas
Like some sweet Effigies
Of Eirene's self, or sweeter
Aphrodite, sweeter still:

With the Shepherd, from whose luckless
Hand upon the Phrygian hill,
Of the three Immortals, She
The fatal prize of Beauty bore,
Floating with him o'er the foam
She rose from, to the Shepherd's home
On the Ionian shore.

IX.

Down from the City to the water-side
Old Priam, with his princely retinue.
By many a wondering Phrygian follow'd, drew
To welcome and bear in the Goddess-bride,
Whom some propitious wind of Fortune blew
From whence they knew not o'er the waters wide
Among the Trojan people to abide,
A pledge of Love and Joy for ever—Yes;
As one who drawing from the leopardess
Her suckling cub, and, fascinated by
The little Savage of the lustrous eye,
Bears home, for all to fondle and caress,
And be the very darling of the house
It makes a den of blood of by and by.

X.

For the wind, that amber blew,
Tempest in its bosom drew,
Soon began to hiss and roar;
And the sweet Effigies
That amber breeze and summer seas
Had wafted to the Ionian shore,

By swift metamorphosis
Turn'd into some hideous, hated,
Fury of Revenge, and fated
Hierophant of Nemesis;
Who, growing with the day and hour,
Grasp'd the wall, and topp'd the tower,
And, when the time came, by its throat
The victim City seized, and smote.

XI.

But now to be resolved, whether indeed
Those fires of Night spoke truly, or mistold
To cheat a doating woman; for, behold,
Advancing from the shore with solemn speed,
A Herald from the Fleet, his footsteps roll'd
In dust, Haste's thirsty consort, but his brow
Check-shadow'd with the nodding Olive-bough;
Who shall interpret us the speechless sign
Of the fork'd tongue that preys upon the pine.

HERALD.

Oh, Fatherland of Argos, back to whom
After ten years do I indeed return
Under the dawn of this auspicious day!
Of all the parted anchors of lost Hope
That this, depended least on, yet should hold;
Amid so many men to me so dear
About me dying, yet myself exempt
Return to live what yet of life remains
Among my own; among my own at last
To share the blest communion of the Dead!

Oh, welcome, welcome, welcome once again
My own dear Country and the light she draws
From the benignant Heav'ns; and all the Gods
Who guard her; Zeus Protector first of all;
And Phœbus, by this all-restoring dawn
Who heals the wounds his arrows dealt so fast
Beside Scamander; and not last nor least
Among the Powers engaged upon our side,
Hermes, the Herald's Patron, and his Pride;
Who, having brought me safely through the war,
Now brings me back to tell the victory
Into my own belovèd country's ear;
Who, all the more by us, the more away,
Beloved, will greet with Welcome no less dear
This remnant of the unremorseful spear.
And, oh, you Temples, Palaces, and throned
Colossi, that affront the rising sun,
If ever yet, your marble foreheads now
Bathe in the splendour of returning Day
To welcome back your so long absent Lord;
Who by Zeus' self directed to the spot
Of Vengeance, and the special instrument
Of Retribution put into his hands,
Has undermined, uprooted, and destroy'd,
Till scarce one stone upon another stands,
The famous Citadel, that, deeply cast
For crime, has all the forfeit paid at last.

CHORUS.

Oh hail and welcome, Herald of good news!
Welcome and hail! and doubt not thy return
As dear to us as thee.

HERALD.

To me so dear,
After so long despair'd of, that, for fear
Life's after-draught the present should belie,
One might implore the Gods ev'n now to die!

CHORUS.

Oh, your soul hunger'd after home!

HERALD.

So sore,
That sudden satisfaction of once more
Return weeps out its surfeit at my eyes.

CHORUS.

And ours, you see, contagiously, no less
The same long grief, and sudden joy, confess.

HERALD.

What! Argos for her missing children yearn'd
As they for her, then?

CHORUS.

Ay; perhaps and more,
Already pining with an inward sore.

HERALD.

How so?

CHORUS.

Nay, Silence, that has best endured
The pain, may best dismiss the memory.

HERALD.

Ev'n so. For who, unless the God himself,

Expects to live his life without a flaw?
Why, once begin to open that account,
Might not *we* tell for ten good years to come
Of all we suffer'd in the ten gone by?
Not the mere course and casualty of war,
Alarum, March, Battle, and such hard knocks
As foe with foe expects to give and take;
But all the complement of miseries
That go to swell a long campaign's account.
Cramm'd close aboard the ships, hard bed, hard board:
Or worse perhaps while foraging ashore
In winter time; when, if not from the walls,
Pelted from Heav'n by Day, to couch by Night
Between the falling dews and rising damps
That elf'd the locks, and set the body fast
With cramp and ague; or, to mend the matter,
Good mother Ida from her winter top
Flinging us down a coverlet of snow.
Or worst perhaps in Summer, toiling in
The bloody harvest-field of torrid sand,
When not an air stirr'd the fierce Asian noon,
And ev'n the sea sleep-sicken'd in his bed.
But why lament the Past, as past it is?
If idle for the Dead who feel no more,
Idler for us to whom this blissful Dawn
Shines doubly bright against the stormy Past;
Who, after such predicament and toil,
Boast, once more standing on our mother soil,
That Zeus, who sent us to revenge the crime
Upon the guilty people, now recalls
To hang their trophies on our temple walls
For monumental heir-looms to all time.

CHORUS.

Oh, but Old age, however slow to learn,
Not slow to learn, nor after you repeat,
Lesson so welcome, Herald of the Fleet!
But here is Clytemnestra; be you first
To bless her ears, as mine, with news so sweet.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

I sang my Song of Triumph ere he came,
Alone I sang it while the City slept,
And these wise Senators, with winking eyes,
Look'd grave, and weigh'd mistrustfully my word,
As the light coinage of a woman's brain.
And so they went their way. But not the less
From those false fires I lit my altar up,
And, woman-wise, held on my song, until
The City taking up the note from me,
Scarce knowing why, about that altar flock'd,
Where, like the Priest of Victory, I stood,
Torch-handed, drenching in triumphant wine
The flame that from the smouldering incense rose.
Now what more needs? This Herald of the Day
Adds but another witness to the Night;
And I will hear no more from other lips,
Till from my husband Agamemnon all,
Whom with all honour I prepare to meet.
Oh, to a loyal woman what so sweet
  As once more wide the gate of welcome fling
To the loved Husband whom the Gods once more
  After long travail home triumphant bring;
Where he shall find her, as he left before,
Fix'd like a trusty watchdog at the door,

Tractable him-ward, but inveterate
Against the doubtful stranger at the gate;
And not a seal within the house but still
Inviolate, under a woman's trust
Incapable of taint as gold of rust.

[*Exit* CLYTEMNESTRA.

HERALD.

A boast not misbeseeming a true woman.

CHORUS.

For then no boast at all. But she says well;
And Time interprets all. Enough for us
To praise the Gods for Agamemnon's safe,
And more than safe return. And Menelaus,
The other half of Argos—What of him?

HERALD.

Those that I most would gladden with good news,
And on a day like this—with fair but false
I dare not.

CHORUS.

What, must fair then needs be false?

HERALD.

Old man, the Gods grant somewhat, and withhold
As seems them good: a time there is for Praise,
A time for Supplication: nor is it well
To twit the celebration of their largess,
Reminding them of somewhat they withhold.

CHORUS.

Yet till we know how much withheld or granted,
We know not how the balance to adjust
Of Supplication or of Praise.

HERALD.

Alas,
The Herald who returns with downcast eyes,
And leafless brow prophetic of Reverse,
Let him at once—at once let him, I say,
Lay the whole burden of Ill-tidings down
In the mid-market place. But why should one
Returning with the garland on his brow
Be stopp'd to name the single missing leaf
Of which the Gods have stinted us!

CHORUS.

Alas,
The putting of a fearful question by
Is but to ill conjecture worse reply!
You bring not back then—do not leave behind—
What Menelaus was?

HERALD.

The Gods forbid!
Safe shipp'd with all the host.

CHORUS.

Well but—how then?
Surely no tempest—

HERALD.

Ay! by that one word
Hitting the centre of a boundless sorrow!

CHORUS.

Well, but if peradventure from the fleet
Parted—not lost?

HERALD.

None but the eye of Day,
Now woke, knows all the havoc of the Night.
For Night it was; all safe aboard—sail set,
And oars all beating home; when suddenly,
As if those old antagonists had sworn
New strife between themselves for our destruction,
The sea, that tamely let us mount his back,
Began to roar and plunge under a lash
Of tempest from the thundering heavens so fierce
As, falling on our fluttering navy, some
Scatter'd, or whirl'd away like flakes of foam:
Or, huddling wave on wave, so ship on ship
Like fighting eagles on each other fell,
And beak, and wing, and claws, entangled, tore
To pieces one another, or dragg'd down.
So when at last the tardy-rising Sun
Survey'd, and show'd, the havoc Night had done,
We, whom some God—or Fortune's self, I think—
Seizing the helm, had steer'd as man could not,
Beheld the waste Ægæan wilderness
Strown with the shatter'd forest of the fleet,
Trunk, branch, and foliage; and yet worse, I ween,
The flower of Argos floating dead between.
Then we, scarce trusting in our own escape,
And saving such as yet had life to save,
Along the heaving wilderness of wave
Went ruminating, who of those we miss'd
Might yet survive, who lost: the saved, no doubt,
As sadly speculating after us.
Of whom, if Menelaus—and the Sun,
(A prayer which all the Gods in Heav'n fulfil!)

Behold him on the water breathing still;
Doubt not that Zeus, under whose special showers
And suns the royal growth of Atreus towers,
Will not let perish stem, and branch, and fruit,
By loss of one corroborating root.

CHORUS.

Oh, Helen, Helen, Helen! oh, fair name
And fatal, of the fatal-fairest dame
That ever blest or blinded human eyes!
Of mortal women Queen beyond compare,
As she whom the foam lifted to the skies
Is Queen of all who breathe immortal air!
Whoever, and from whatsoever wells
Of Divination, drew the syllables
By which we name thee; who shall ever dare
In after time the fatal name to wear,
Or would, to be so fatal, be so fair?
Whose dowry was a Husband's shame;
Whose nuptial torch was Troy in flame;
Whose bridal Chorus, groans and cries;
Whose banquet, brave men's obsequies;
Whose Hymenæal retinue,
The winged dogs of War that flew
Over lands and over seas,
Following the tainted breeze,
Till, Scamander reed among,
Their fiery breath and bloody tongue
The fatal quarry found and slew;
And, having done the work to which
The God himself halloo'd them, back
Return a maim'd and scatter'd pack.

II.

And he for whose especial cause
  Zeus his winged instrument
With the lightning in his claws
  From the throne of thunder sent:
He for whom the sword was drawn:
Mountain ashes fell'd and sawn;
  And the armed host of Hellas
Cramm'd within them, to discharge
On the shore to bleed at large;
He, in mid accomplishment
Of Justice, from his glory rent!
What ten years had hardly won,
In a single night undone;
And on earth what saved and gain'd,
By the ravin sea distrain'd.

III.

Such is the sorrow of this royal house;
  And none in all the City but forlorn
Under its own peculiar sorrow bows.
For the stern God who, deaf to human love,
  Grudges the least abridgment of the tale
Of human blood once pledged to him, above
The centre of the murder-dealing crowd
  Suspends in air his sanguinary scale;
And for the blooming Hero gone a-field
  Homeward remits a beggarly return
Of empty helmet, fallen sword and shield,
  And some light ashes in a little urn.

IV.

Then wild and high goes up the cry
To heav'n, "So true! so brave! so fair!
"The young colt of the flowing hair
"And flaming eye, and now—look there!
"Ashes and arms!" or, "Left behind
"Unburied, in the sun and wind
"To wither, or become the feast
"Of bird obscene, or unclean beast;
'The good, the brave, without a grave—
"All to redeem *her* from the shame
"To which she sold her self and name!"—
For such insinuation in the dark
About the City travels like a spark;
Till the pent tempest into lightning breaks,
And takes the topmost pinnacle for mark.

V.

But avaunt all evil omen!
Perish many, so the State
They die for live inviolate;
Which, were all her mortal leafage
In the blast of Ares scatter'd,
So herself at heart unshatter'd,
In due season she retrieves
All her wasted wealth of leaves,
And age on age shall spread and rise
To cover earth and breathe the skies.
While the rival at her side
Who the wrath of Heav'n defied,
By the lashing blast, or flashing
Bolt of Heav'n comes thunder-crashing,

Top and lop, and trunk and bough,
Down, for ever down. And now,
He to whom the Zeus of Vengeance
  Did commit the bolt of Fate—
Agamemnon—how shall I
With a Pæan not too high
For mortal glory, to provoke
From the Gods a counter-stroke,
Nor below desert so lofty,
  Suitably felicitate ?
Such as chasten'd Age for due
May give, and Manhood take for true.
For, as many men comply
From founts no deeper than the eye
  With others' sorrows ; many more,
With a Welcome from the lips,
That far the halting heart outstrips,
  Fortune's Idol fall before.
Son of Atreus, I premise,
  When at first the means and manhood
Of the cities thou didst stake
For a wanton woman's sake,
  I might grudge the sacrifice ;
  But, the warfare once begun,
Hardly fought and hardly won,
Now from Glory's overflowing
Horn of Welcome all her glowing
  Honours, and with uninvidious
Hand, before your advent throwing,
I salute, and bid thee welcome,
Son of Atreus, Agamemnon,
Zeus' revenging Right-hand, Lord
  Of taken Troy and righted Greece :

Bid thee from the roving throne
Of War the reeking steed release;
Leave the laurell'd ship to ride
Anchor'd in her country's side,
And resume the royal helm
Of thy long-abandon'd realm:
What about the State or Throne
Of good or evil since has grown,
Alter, cancel, or complete;
And to well or evil-doer,
Even-handed Justice mete.

*Enter* AGAMEMNON *in his chariot*, CASSANDRA *following in another.*

AGAMEMNON.

First, as first due, my Country I salute,
And all her tutelary Gods; all those
Who, having sent me forth, now bring me back,
After full retribution wrought on those
Who retribution owed us, and the Gods
In full consistory determined; each,
With scarce a swerving eye to Mercy's side,
Dropping his vote into the urn of blood.
Caught and consuming in whose fiery wrath,
The stately City, from her panting ashes
Into the nostril of revolted Heav'n
Gusts of expiring opulence puffs up*.
For which, I say, the Gods alone be thank'd;
By whose connivance round about the wall

* Those who know the Greek will scarce accuse me of over-alliteration in this line, which runs in the original thus,

Spodos propempei pionas ploutou pnoas.

We drew the belt of Ares, and laid bare
The flank of Ilium to the Lion-horse *,
Who sprung by night over the city wall,
And foal'd his iron progeny within,
About the setting of the Pleiades †.
Thus much by way of prelude to the Gods.
For you, oh white-hair'd senators of Argos,
Your measured Welcome I receive for just;
Aware on what a tickle base of fortune
The monument of human Glory stands;
And, for humane congratulation, knowing
How, smile as may the mask, the man behind
Frets at the fortune that degrades his own.
This, having heard of from the wise, myself,
From long experience in the ways of men,
Can vouch for—what a shadow of a shade
Is human loyalty; and, as a proof,
Of all the Host that fill'd the Grecian ship,
And pour'd at large along the field of Troy,
One only Chief—and he, too, like yourself,
At first with little stomach for the cause—
The wise Odysseus—once in harness, he
With all his might pull'd in the yoke with me,
Through envy, obloquy, and opposition:
And in Odysseus' honour, live or dead—
For yet we know not which—shall this be said.
Of which enough. For other things of moment

* Dr Donaldson tells us in his Varronianus (says Paley), that the Lion was the symbol of the Atreidæ; and Pausanias writes that part of the ancient walls of Mycenæ was yet standing in his day, and Lions on the gate. Wordsworth (Athens and Attica) says the Lion was often set up to commemorate a victory.

† "About the setting of the Pleiades," is about the end of Autumn.

To which you point, or human or divine,
We shall forthwith consider and adjudge
In seasonable council; what is well,
Or in our absence well deserving, well
Establish and requite; what not, redress
With salutary caution; or, if need,
With the sharp edge of Justice; and to health
Restore, and right, our ailing Commonwealth.
Now, first of all, by my own altar-hearth
To thank the Gods for my return, and pray
That Victory, which thus far by my side
Has flown with us, with us may still abide.

*Enter* CLYTEMNESTRA *from the Palace.*

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Oh Men of Argos, count it not a shame
If a fond wife, and one whom riper years
From Youth's becoming bashfulness excuse,
Dares own her love before the face of men;
Nor leaving it for others to enhance,
Simply declares the wretched widowhood
Which these ten years she has endured, since first
Her husband Agamemnon went to Troy.
'Tis no light matter, let me tell you, Sirs,
A woman left in charge of house and home—
And when that house and home a Kingdom—and
She left alone to rule it—and ten years!
Beside dissent and discontent at home,
Storm'd from abroad with contrary reports,
Now fair, now foul; but still as time wore on
Growing more desperate; as dangerous
Unto the widow'd kingdom as herself.

Why, had my husband there but half the wounds
Fame stabb'd him with, he were before me now,
Not the whole man we see him, but a body
Gash'd into network; ay, or had he died
But half as often as Report gave out,
He would have needed thrice the cloak of earth
To cover him, that triple Geryon
Lies buried under in the world below.
Thus, back and forward baffled, and at last
So desperate—that, if I be here alive
To tell the tale, no thanks to me for that,
Whose hands had twisted round my neck the noose
Which others loosen'd—my Orestes too
In whose expanding manhood day by day
My Husband I perused—and, by the way,
Whom wonder not, my Lord, not seeing here;
My simple mother-love, and jealousy
Of civic treason—ever as you know,
Most apt to kindle when the lord away—
Having bestow'd him, out of danger's reach,
With Strophius of Phocis, wholly yours
Bound by the generous usages of war,
That make the once-won foe so fast a friend.
Thus, widow'd of my son as of his sire,
No wonder if I wept—not drops, but showers,
The ten years' night through which I watch'd in vain
The star that was to bring him back to me;
Or, if I slept, a sleep so thin as scared
Even at the slight incursion of the gnat;
And yet more thick with visionary terrors
Than thrice the waking while had occupied.
Well, I have borne all this: all this have borne,
Without a grudge against the wanderer,

Whose now return makes more than rich amends
For all ungrateful absence—Agamemnon,
My Lord and Husband; Lord of Argos; Troy's
Confounder; Mainstay of the realm of Greece;
And Master-column of the house of Atreus—
Oh wonder not if I accumulate
All honour and endearment on his head!
If to his country, how much more to me,
Welcome, as land to sailors long at sea,
Or water in the desert; whose return
Is fire to the forsaken winter-hearth;
Whose presence, like the rooted Household Tree
That, winter-dead so long, anew puts forth
To shield us from the Dogstar, what time Zeus
Wrings the tart vintage into blissful juice.
Down from the chariot thou standest in,
Crown'd with the flaming towers of Troy, descend,
And to this palace, rich indeed with thee,
But beggar-poor without, return! And ye,
My women, carpet all the way before,
From the triumphal carriage to the door,
With all the gold and purple in the chest
  Stored these ten years; and to what purpose stored,
  Unless to strew the footsteps of their Lord
Returning to his unexpected rest!

AGAMEMNON.

Daughter of Leda, Mistress of my house,
Beware lest loving Welcome of your Lord,
Measuring itself by his protracted absence,
Exceed the bound of rightful compliment,
And better left to other lips than yours.

Address me not, address me not, I say
With dust-adoring adulation, meeter
For some barbarian Despot from his slave;
Nor with invidious Purple strew my way,
Fit only for the footstep of a God
Lighting from Heav'n to earth. Let whoso will
Trample their glories underfoot, not I.
Woman, I charge you, honour me no more
Than as the man I am; if honour-worth,
Needing no other trapping but the fame
Of the good deed I clothe myself withal;
And knowing that, of all their gifts to man,
No greater gift than Self-sobriety
The Gods vouchsafe him in the race of life:
Which, after thus far running, if I reach
The goal in peace, it shall be well for me.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Why, how think you old Priam would have walk'd
Had he return'd to Troy your conqueror,
As you to Hellas his?

AGAMEMNON.

What then? Perhaps
Voluptuary Asiatic-like,
On gold and purple.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Well, and grudging this,
When all that out before your footsteps flows
Ebbs back into the treasury again;
Think how much more, had Fate the tables turn'd,

Irrevocably from those coffers gone,
For those barbarian feet to walk upon,
To buy your ransom back!

AGAMEMNON.

Enough, enough!
I know my reason.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

What! the jealous God?
Or, peradventure, yet more envious man?

AGAMEMNON.

And *that* of no small moment.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

No; the one
Sure proof of having won what others would.

AGAMEMNON.

No matter—Strife but ill becomes a woman.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And frank submission to her simple wish
How well becomes the Soldier in his strength!

AGAMEMNON.

And I must then submit?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ay, Agamemnon,
Deny me not this first Desire on this
First Morning of your long-desired Return.

AGAMEMNON.

But not till I have put these sandals off,
That, slave-like, too officiously would pander
Between the purple and my dainty feet.
For fear, for fear indeed, some Jealous eye
From heav'n above, or earth below, should strike
The Man who walks the earth Immortal-like.
So much for that. For this same royal maid,
Cassandra, daughter of King Priamus,
Whom, as the flower of all the spoil of Troy,
The host of Hellas dedicates to me;
Entreat her gently; knowing well that none
But submit hardly to a foreign yoke;
And those of Royal blood most hardly brook.
That if I sin thus trampling underfoot
A woof in which the Heav'ns themselves are dyed,
The jealous God may less resent his crime,
Who mingles human mercy with his pride.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

The Sea there is, and shall the sea be dried?
Fount inexhaustibler of purple grain
Than all the wardrobes of the world could drain;
And Earth there is, whose dusky closets hide
The precious metal wherewith not in vain
The Gods themselves this Royal house provide;
For what occasion worthier, or more meet,
Than now to carpet the victorious feet
Of Him who, thus far having done their will,
Shall now their last About-to-be fulfil?

[AGAMEMNON *descends from his chariot, and goes with* CLYTEMNESTRA *into the house,* CASSANDRA *remaining.*]

CHORUS.

About the nations runs a saw,
That Over-good ill-fortune breeds;
And true that, by the mortal law,
Fortune her spoilt children feeds
To surfeit, such as sows the seeds
Of Insolence, that, as it grows,
The flower of Self-repentance blows.
And true that Virtue often leaves
The marble walls and roofs of kings,
And underneath the poor man's eaves
On smoky rafter folds her wings.

II.

Thus the famous city, flown
With insolence, and overgrown,
Is humbled: all her splendour blown
To smoke: her glory laid in dust;
Who shall say by doom unjust?
But should He to whom the wrong
Was done, and Zeus himself made strong
To do the vengeance He decreed—
At last returning with the meed
He wrought for—should the jealous Eye
That blights full-blown prosperity
Pursue him—then indeed, indeed,
Man should hoot and scare aloof
Good-fortune lighting on the roof;
Yea, even Virtue's self forsake
If Glory follow'd in the wake;

Seeing bravest, best, and wisest
But the playthings of a day,
Which a shadow can trip over,
And a breath can puff away.

CLYTEMNESTRA (*re-entering*).

Yet for a moment let me look on her—
This, then, is Priam's daughter—
Cassandra, and a Prophetess, whom Zeus
Has giv'n into my hands to minister
Among my slaves. Didst thou prophesy that?
Well—some more famous have so fall'n before—
Ev'n Herakles, the son of Zeus, they say
Was sold, and bow'd his shoulder to the yoke.

CHORUS.

And, if needs must a captive, better far
Of some old house that affluent Time himself
Has taught the measure of prosperity,
Than drunk with sudden superfluity.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ev'n so. You hear? Therefore at once descend
From that triumphal chariot—And yet
She keeps her station still, her laurel on,
Disdaining to make answer.

CHORUS.

Nay, perhaps,
Like some stray swallow blown across the seas,
Interpreting no twitter but her own.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

But, if barbarian, still interpreting
The universal language of the hand.

CHORUS.

Which yet again she does not seem to see,
Staring before her with wide-open eyes
As in a trance.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ay, ay, a prophetess—
Phœbus Apollo's minion once—Whose now?
A time will come for her. See you to it:
A greater business now is on my hands:
For lo! the fire of Sacrifice is lit,
And the grand victim by the altar stands.
[*Exit* CLYTEMNESTRA.

CHORUS (*continuing*).

Still a mutter'd and half-blind
Superstition haunts mankind,
That, by some divine decree
Yet by mortal undivined,
Mortal Fortune must not over-
Leap the bound he cannot see;
For that even wisest labour
Lofty-building, builds to fall,
Evermore a jealous neighbour
Undermining floor and wall.
So that on the smoothest water
Sailing, in a cloudless sky,
The wary merchant overboard
Flings something of his precious hoard
To pacify the jealous eye,
That will not suffer man to swell
Over human measure. Well,

As the Gods have order'd we
Must take—I know not—let it be.
But, by rule of retribution,
  Hidden, too, from human eyes,
Fortune in her revolution,
  If she fall, shall fall to rise:
And the hand of Zeus dispenses
  Even measure in the main:
One short harvest recompenses
  With a glut of golden grain;
So but men in patience wait
  Fortune's counter-revolution
Axled on eternal Fate;
And the Sisters three that twine,
Cut not short the vital line;
For indeed the purple seed
Of life once shed—

CASSANDRA.

Phœbus Apollo!

CHORUS.

Hark!

The lips at last unlocking.

CASSANDRA.

Phœbus! Phœbus!

CHORUS.

Well, what of Phœbus, maiden? though a name
'Tis but disparagement to call upon
In misery.

CASSANDRA.

Apollo! Apollo! Again!
Oh, the burning arrow through the brain!
Phœbus Apollo! Apollo!

CHORUS.

Seemingly
Possess'd indeed—whether by—

CASSANDRA.

Phœbus! Phœbus!
Thorough trampled ashes, blood, and fiery rain,
Over water seething, and behind the breathing
Warhorse in the darkness—till you rose again—
Took the helm—took the rein—

CHORUS.

As one that half asleep at dawn recalls
A night of Horror!

CASSANDRA.

Hither, whither, Phœbus? And with whom,
Leading me, lighting me—

CHORUS.

I can answer that—

CASSANDRA.

Down to what slaughter-house?
Foh! the smell of carnage through the door
Scares me from it—drags me tow'rd it—
Phœbus! Apollo! Apollo!

CHORUS.

One of the dismal prophet-pack, it seems,
That hunt the trail of blood. But here at fault—
This is no den of slaughter, but the house
Of Agamemnon.

CASSANDRA.

Down upon the towers
Phantoms of two mangled Children hover—and a famish'd man,
At an empty table glaring, seizes and devours!

CHORUS.

Thyestes and his children! Strange enough
For any maiden from abroad to know,
Or, knowing—

CASSANDRA.

And look! in the chamber below
The terrible Woman, listening, watching,
Under a mask, preparing the blow
In the fold of her robe—

CHORUS.

Nay, but again at fault:
For in the tragic story of this House—
Unless, indeed, the fatal Helen—
No woman—

CASSANDRA.

No Woman—Tisiphone! Daughter
Of Tartarus—love-grinning Woman above,
Dragon-tail'd under—honey-tongued, Harpy-claw'd,
Into the glittering meshes of slaughter

She wheedles, entices, him into the poisonous
Fold of the serpent—

CHORUS.

Peace, mad woman, peace!
Whose stony lips once open vomit out
Such uncouth horrors.

CASSANDRA.

I tell you the lioness
Slaughters the Lion asleep; and lifting
Her blood-dripping fangs buried deep in his mane,
Glaring about her insatiable, bellowing,
Bounds hither—Phœbus, Apollo, Apollo, Apollo!
Whither have you led me, under night alive with fire,
Through the trampled ashes of the city of my sire,
From my slaughtered kinsmen, fallen throne, insulted shrine,
Slave-like to be butcher'd, the daughter of a Royal line?

CHORUS.

And so returning, like a nightingale
Returning to the passionate note of woe
By which the silence first was broken!

CASSANDRA.

Oh,
A nightingale, a nightingale, indeed,
That, as she "Itys! Itys! Itys!" so
I "Helen! Helen! Helen!" having sung
Amid my people, now to those who flung
And trampled on the nest, and slew the young,

Keep crying "Blood! blood! blood!" and none will heed!
Now what for me is this prophetic weed,
And what for me is this immortal crown,
Who like a wild swan from Scamander's reed
Chaunting her death-song float Cocytus-down?
There let the fatal Leaves to perish lie!
To perish, or enrich some other brow
With that all-fatal gift of Prophecy
They palpitated under Him who now,
Checking his flaming chariot in mid sky,
With divine irony sees disadorn
The wretch his love has made the people's scorn,
The raving quean, the mountebank, the scold,
Who, wrapt up in the ruin she foretold
With those who would not listen, now descends
To that dark kingdom where his empire ends.

CHORUS.

Strange that Apollo should the laurel wreath
Of Prophecy he crown'd your head withal
Himself disgrace. But something have we heard
Of some divine revenge for slighted love.

CASSANDRA.

Ay—and as if in malice to attest
With one expiring beam of Second-sight
Wherewith his victim he has cursed and blest,
Ere quench'd for ever in descending night;
As from behind a veil no longer peeps
The Bride of Truth, nor from their hidden deeps
Darkle the waves of Prophecy, but run
Clear from the very fountain of the Sun.

Ye call'd—and rightly call'd—me bloodhound; ye
That like old lagging dogs in self-despite
Must follow up the scent with me; with me,
Who having smelt the blood about this house
Already spilt, now bark of more to be.
For, though you hear them not, the infernal Choir
Whose dread antiphony forswears the lyre,
Who now are chaunting of that grim carouse
Of blood with which the children fed their Sire,
Shall never from their dreadful chorus stop
Till all be counter-pledged to the last drop.

CHORUS.

Hinting at what indeed has long been done,
And widely spoken, no Apollo needs;
And for what else you aim at—still in dark
And mystic language—

CASSANDRA.

Nay, then, in the speech,
She that reproved me was so glib to teach—
Before yon Sun a hand's-breadth in the skies
He moves in shall have moved, those age-sick eyes
Shall open wide on Agamemnon slain
Before your very feet. Now, speak I plain?

CHORUS.

Blasphemer, hush!

CASSANDRA.

Ay, hush the mouth you may,
But not the murder.

CHORUS.

Murder! But the Gods—

CASSANDRA.

The Gods!
Who even now are their accomplices.

CHORUS.

Woman!—Accomplices—With whom?—

CASSANDRA.

With Her,
Who brandishing aloft the axe of doom,
That just has laid one victim at her feet,
Looks round her for that other, without whom
The banquet of revenge were incomplete.
Yet ere I fall will I prelude the strain
Of Triumph, that in full I shall repeat
When, looking from the twilight Underland,
I welcome Her as she descends amain,
Gash'd like myself, but by a dearer hand.
For that old murder'd Lion with me slain,
Rolling an awful eyeball through the gloom
He stalks about of Hades up to Day,
Shall rouse the whelp of exile far away,
His only authentic offspring, ere the grim
Wolf crept between his Lioness and him;
Who with one stroke of Retribution, her
Who did the deed, and her adulterer,
Shall drive to hell; and then, himself pursued
By the wing'd Furies of his Mother's blood,
Shall drag about the yoke of Madness, till
Released, when Nemesis has gorged her fill,
By that same God, in whose prophetic ray
Viewing To-morrow mirror'd as To-day,

And that this House of Atreus the same wine
Themselves must drink they brew'd for me and mine;
I close my lips for ever with one prayer,
That the dark Warder of the World below
Would ope the portal at a single blow.

CHORUS.

And the raving voice, that rose
  Out of silence into speech
  Over-shooting human reach,
Back to silence foams and blows,
  Leaving all my bosom heaving—
Wrath and raving all, one knows;
Prophet-seeming, but if ever
  Of the Prophet-God possest,
  By the Prophet's self confest
God-abandon'd—woman's shrill
Anguish into tempest rising,
Louder as less listen'd.
                Still—
Spite of Reason, spite of Will,
What unwelcome, what unholy,
Vapour of Foreboding, slowly
Rising from the central soul's
Recesses, all in darkness rolls?
What! shall Age's torpid ashes
Kindle at the ransom spark
Of a raving maiden?—Hark!
What was that behind the wall?
A heavy blow—a groan—a fall—
Some one crying—Listen further—
Hark again then, crying "Murder!"

Some one—who then? Agamemnon?
Agamemnon?—Hark again!
Murder! murder! murder! murder!
Help within there! Help without there!
Break the doors in!—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

(*Appearing from within, where lies* AGAMEMNON *dead.*)*

Spare your pain.
Look! I who but just now before you all
Boasted of loyal wedlock unashamed,
Now unashamed dare boast the contrary.
Why, how else should one compass the defeat
Of him who underhand contrives one's own,
Unless by such a snare of circumstance
As, once enmesh'd, he never should break through?
The blow now struck was not the random blow
Of sudden passion, but with slow device
Prepared, and levell'd with the hand of time.
I say it who devised it; I who did;
And now stand here to face the consequence.
Ay, in a deadlier web than of that loom
In whose blood-purple he divined a doom,
And fear'd to walk upon, but walk'd at last,
Entangling him inextricably fast,
I smote him, and he bellow'd; and again
I smote, and with a groan his knees gave way;
And, as he fell before me, with a third
And last libation from the deadly mace
I pledged the crowning draught to Hades due,

* Hermann says, "Tractis tabulatis"—the scene *drawing*—"conspicitur Clytemnestra in conclavi stans ad corpus Agamemnonis."

That subterranean Saviour—of the Dead!*
At which he spouted up the Ghost in such
A burst of purple as, bespatter'd with,
No less did I rejoice than the green ear
Rejoices in the largess of the skies
That fleeting Iris follows as it flies.

CHORUS.

Oh woman, woman, woman!
By what accursèd root or weed
Of Earth, or Sea, or Hell, inflamed,
Darest stand before us unashamed
And, daring do, dare glory in the deed!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Oh, I that dream'd the fall of Troy, as you
Belike of Troy's destroyer. Dream or not,
Here lies your King—my Husband—Agamemnon,
Slain by this right hand's righteous handicraft.
Like you, or like it not, alike to me;
To me alike whether or not you share
In making due libation over this
Great Sacrifice—if ever due, from him
Who, having charged so deep a bowl of blood,
Himself is forced to drink it to the dregs.

CHORUS.

Woman, what blood but that of Troy, which Zeus
Foredoom'd for expiation by his hand
For whom the penalty was pledged? And now,
Over his murder'd body, Thou

* At certain Ceremonies, the Third and crowning Libation was to *Zeus* Sotēr; and thus ironically to Pluto.

Talk of libation!—Thou! Thou! Thou!
But mark! Not thine of sacred wine
Over his head, but ours on thine
Of curse, and groan, and torn-up stone,
To slay or storm thee from the gate,
The City's curse, the People's hate,
Execrate, exterminate—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ay, ay, to me how lightly you adjudge
Exile or death, and never had a word
Of counter-condemnation for Him there;
Who, when the field throve with the proper flock
For Sacrifice, forsooth let be the beast,
And with his own hand his own innocent
Blood, and the darling passion of my womb—
Her slew—to lull a peevish wind of Thrace.
And him who cursed the city with that crime
You hail with acclamation; but on me,
Who only do the work you should have done,
You turn the axe of condemnation. Well;
Threaten you me, I take the challenge up;
Here stand we face to face; win Thou the game,
And take the stake you aim at; but if I—
Then, by the Godhead that for me decides,
Another lesson you shall learn, though late.

CHORUS.

Man-mettled evermore, and now
Manslaughter-madden'd! Shameless brow!
But do you think us deaf and blind
Not to know, and long ago,

What Passion under all the prate
Of holy justice made thee hate
Where Love was due, and love where—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Nay, then, hear!
By this dead Husband, and the reconciled
Avenging Fury of my slaughter'd child,
I swear I will not reign the slave of fear
While he that holds me, as I hold him, dear,
Kindles his fire upon this hearth: my fast
Shield for the time to come, as of the past.
Yonder lies he that in the honey'd arms
Of his Chryseides under Troy walls
Dishonour'd mine: and this last laurell'd wench,
Prophetic messmate of the rower's bench,
Thus far in triumph his, with him along
Shall go, together chaunting one death-song
To Hades—fitting garnish for the feast
Which Fate's avenging hand through mine hath drest.

CHORUS.

Woe, woe, woe, woe!
That death as sudden as the blow
That laid Thee low would me lay low
Where low thou liest, my sovereign Lord!
Who ten years long to Trojan sword
Devoted, and to storm aboard,
In one ill woman's cause accurst,
Liest slain before thy palace door
By one accursedest and worst!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Call not on Death, old man, that, call'd or no,
Comes quick; nor spend your ebbing breath on me,
Nor Helena: who but as arrows be
Shot by the hidden hand behind the bow.

CHORUS.

Alas, alas! The Curse I know
That round the House of Atreus clings,
About the roof, about the walls,
Shrouds it with his sable wings;
And still as each new victim falls,
And gorged with kingly gore,
Down on the bleeding carcase flings,
And croaks for "More, more, more!"

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ay, now, indeed, you harp on likelier strings.
Not I, nor Helen, but that terrible
Alastor of old Tantalus in Hell;
Who, one sole actor in the scene begun
By him, and carried down from sire to son,
The mask of Victim and Avenger shifts:
And, for a last catastrophe, that grim
Guest of the abominable banquet lifts
His head from Hell, and in my person cries
For one full-grown sufficient sacrifice,
Requital of the feast prepared for him
Of his own flesh and blood—And there it lies.

CHORUS.

Oh, Agamemnon! Oh, my Lord!
Who, after ten years toil'd;

After barbarian lance and sword
Encounter'd, fought, and foil'd;
Returning with the just award
Of Glory, thus inglorious by
Thine own domestic Altar die,
Fast in the spider meshes coil'd
Of Treason most abhorr'd!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And by what retribution more complete,
Than, having in the meshes of deceit
Enticed my child, and slain her like a fawn
Upon the altar; to that altar drawn
Himself, like an unconscious beast, full-fed
With Conquest, and the garland on his head,
Is slain? and now, gone down among the Ghost,
Of taken Troy indeed may make the most,
But not *one* unrequited murder boast.

CHORUS.

Oh Agamemnon, dead, dead, dead, dead, dead!
What hand, what pious hand shall wash the wound
Through which the sacred spirit ebb'd and fled!
With reverend care compose, and to the ground
Commit the mangled form of Majesty,
And pour the due libation o'er the mound!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

This hand, that struck the guilty life away,
The guiltless carcase in the dust shall lay
With due solemnities: and if with no
Mock tears, or howling counterfeit of woe,
On this side earth; perhaps the innocent thing,

Whom with paternal love he sent before,
Meeting him by the melancholy shore,
Her arms about him with a kiss shall fling,
And lead him to his shadowy throne below.

CHORUS.

Alas! alas! the fatal rent
Which through the house of Atreus went,
Gapes again; a purple rain
Sweats the marble floor, and falls
From the tottering roof and walls,
The Dæmon heaving under; gone
The master-prop they rested on:
And the storm once more awake
  Of Nemesis; of Nemesis
Whose fury who shall slake!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ev'n I; who by this last grand victim hope
The Pyramid of Vengeance so to cope,
That—and methinks I hear him in the deep
  Beneath us growling tow'rd his rest—the stern
  Alastor to some other roof may turn,
Leaving us here at last in peace to keep
What of life's harvest yet remains to reap.

CHORUS.

Thou to talk of reaping Peace
Who sowest Murder! Woman, cease!
And, despite that iron face—
Iron as the bloody mace

Thou bearest—boasting as if Vengeance
  Centred in that hand alone;
Know that, Fury pledged to Fury,
Vengeance owes himself the debts
He makes, and while he serves thee, whets
  His knife upon another stone,
Against thyself, and him with thee
Colleaguing, as you boast to be,
The tools of Fate. But Fate is Zeus;
Zeus—who for awhile permitting
  Sin to prosper in his name,
Shall vindicate his own abuse;
And having brought his secret thought
To light, shall break and fling to shame
The baser tools with which he wrought.

ÆGISTHUS: CLYTEMNESTRA: CHORUS.

All hail, thou daybreak of my just revenge!
In which, as waking from injurious sleep,
Methinks I recognize the Gods enthroned
In the bright conclave of eternal Justice,
Revindicate the wrongs of man to man!
For see *this* man—so dear to me now dead—
Caught in the very meshes of the snare
By which his father Atreus netted mine.
For that same Atreus surely, was it not?
Who, wrought by false Suspicion to fix'd Hate*,
From Argos out his younger brother drove,
My sire—Thyestes—drove him like a wolf,

* Or,

Who, first suspecting falsely, and anon
Detesting him his false suspicion wrong'd, &c.

Keeping his cubs—save one—to better purpose.
For when at last the home-heartbroken man
Crept humbly back again, craving no more
Of his own country than to breathe its air
In liberty, and of her fruits as much
As not to starve withal—the savage King,
With damnable alacrity of hate,
And reconciliation of revenge,
Bade him, all smiles, to supper—such a supper,
Where the prime dainty was—my brother's flesh,
So maim'd and clipt of human likelihood,
That the unsuspecting Father, light of heart,
And quick of appetite, at once fell to,
And ate—ate—what, with savage irony
As soon as eaten, told—the wretched man
Disgorging with a shriek, down to the ground
The table with its curst utensil dashed,
And, grinding into pieces with his heel,
Cried, loud enough for Heav'n and Hell to hear,
"Thus perish all the race of Pleisthenes!"
And now behold! the son of that same Atreus
By me the son of that Thyestes slain
Whom the kind brother, sparing from the cook,
Had with his victim pack'd to banishment;
Where Nemesis—(so sinners from some nook,
Whence least they think assailable, assailed)—
Rear'd me from infancy till fully grown,
To claim in full my father's bloody due.
Ay, I it was—none other—far away
Who spun the thread, which gathering day by day
Mesh after mesh, inch upon inch, at last
Reach'd him, and wound about him, as he lay,
And in the supper of his smoking Troy

Devour'd his own destruction—scarce condign
Return for that his Father forced on mine.

CHORUS.

Ægisthus, only things of baser breed
Insult the fallen; fall'n too, as you boast,
By one who plann'd but dared not do the deed.
This is your hour of triumph. But take heed;
The blood of Atreus is not all outrun
With this slain King, but flowing in a son,
Who saved by such an exile as your own
For such a counter-retribution—

ÆGISTHUS.

Oh,
You then, the nether benchers of the realm,
Dare open tongue on those who rule the helm?
Take heed yourselves; for, old and dull of wit,
And harden'd as your mouth against the bit,
Be wise in time; kick not against the spurs;
Remembering Princes are shrewd taskmasters.

CHORUS.

Beware thyself, bewaring me;
Remembering that, too sharply stirr'd,
The spurrer need beware the spurr'd;
As thou of me; whose single word
Shall rouse the City—yea, the very
  Stones you walk upon, in thunder
Gathering o'er your head, to bury
  Thee and thine Adultress under!

ÆGISTHUS.

Raven, that with croaking jaws
Unorphean, undivine,
After you no City draws;
And if any vengeance, mine
Upon your wither'd shoulders—

CHORUS.

Thine!
Who daring not to strike the blow
Thy worse than woman-craft design'd,
To worse than woman—

ÆGISTHUS.

Soldiers, ho!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Softly, good Ægisthus, softly; let the sword that has so deep
Drunk of righteous Retribution now within the scabbard sleep!
And if Nemesis be sated with the blood already spilt,
Even so let us, nor carry lawful Justice into Guilt.
Sheathe your sword; dismiss your spears; and you, Old men, your howling cease,
And, ere ill blood come to running, each unto his home in peace,
Recognizing what is done for done indeed, as done it is,
And husbanding your scanty breath to pray that nothing more amiss.
Farewell. Meanwhile, you and I, Ægisthus, shall deliberate,
When the storm is blowing under, how to settle House and State.

# RUBÁIYÁT

OF

# OMAR KHAYYÁM,

THE

# ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA.

Rendered into English Verse.

# OMAR KHAYYÁM,

THE

# ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA.

OMAR KHAYYÁM was born at Naishápúr in Khorassán in the latter half of our Eleventh, and died within the First Quarter of our Twelfth Century. The slender Story of his Life is curiously twined about that of two other very considerable Figures in their Time and Country: one of whom tells the Story of all Three. This was Nizám ul Mulk, Vizyr to Alp Arslan the Son, and Malik Shah the Grandson, of Toghrul Beg the Tartar, who had wrested Persia from the feeble Successor of Mahmúd the Great, and founded that Seljukian Dynasty which finally roused Europe into the Crusades. This Nizám ul Mulk, in his *Wasiyat*—or *Testament*—which he wrote and left as a Memorial for future Statesmen—relates the following, as quoted in the *Calcutta Review*, No 59, from Mirkhond's History of the Assassins.

"'One of the greatest of the wise men of Khorassan 'was the Imám Mowaffak of Naishápúr, a man highly 'honoured and reverenced,—may God rejoice his soul;

'his illustrious years exceeded eighty-five, and it was the 'universal belief that every boy who read the Koran or 'studied the traditions in his presence, would assuredly 'attain to honour and happiness. For this cause did my 'father send me from Tús to Naishápúr with Abd-us-samad, 'the doctor of law, that I might employ myself in study 'and learning under the guidance of that illustrious teacher. 'Towards me he ever turned an eye of favour and kindness, 'and as his pupil I felt for him extreme affection and 'devotion, so that I passed four years in his service. When 'I first came there, I found two other pupils of mine own 'age newly arrived, Hakim Omar Khayyám, and the ill-fated 'Ben Sabbáh. Both were endowed with sharpness of wit 'and the highest natural powers; and we three formed a 'close friendship together. When the Imám rose from his 'lectures, they used to join me, and we repeated to each 'other the lessons we had heard. Now Omar was a native 'of Naishápúr, while Hasan Ben Sabbáh's father was one 'Ali, a man of austere life and practice, but heretical in his 'creed and doctrine. One day Hasan said to me and to 'Khayyám, 'It is a universal belief that the pupils of the 'Imám Mowaffak will attain to fortune. Now, even if we '*all* do not attain thereto, without doubt one of us will; what 'then shall be our mutual pledge and bond?' We answered, ''Be it what you please.' 'Well,' he said, 'let us make a vow, 'that to whomsoever this fortune falls, he shall share it 'equally with the rest, and reserve no pre-eminence for him-'self.' 'Be it so,' we both replied, and on those terms we 'mutually pledged our words. Years rolled on, and I went 'from Khorassan to Transoxiana, and wandered to Ghazni 'and Cabul; and when I returned, I was invested with 'office, and rose to be administrator of affairs during the 'Sultanate of Sultan Alp Arslán.'

"He goes on to state, that years passed by, and both his old school-friends found him out, and came and claimed a share in his good fortune, according to the school-day vow. The Vizier was generous and kept his word. Hasan demanded a place in the government, which the Sultan granted at the Vizier's request; but discontented with a gradual rise, he plunged into the maze of intrigue of an oriental court, and, failing in a base attempt to supplant his benefactor, he was disgraced and fell. After many mishaps and wanderings, Hasan became the head of the Persian sect of the *Ismailians*, —a party of fanatics who had long murmured in obscurity, but rose to an evil eminence under the guidance of his strong and evil will. In A.D. 1090, he seized the castle of Alamút, in the province of Rúdbar, which lies in the mountainous tract south of the Caspian Sea; and it was from this mountain home he obtained that evil celebrity among the Crusaders as the OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAINS, and spread terror through the Mohammedan world; and it is yet disputed whether the word *Assassin*, which they have left in the language of modern Europe as their dark memorial, is derived from the *hashish*, or opiate of hemp-leaves (the Indian *bhang*), with which they maddened themselves to the sullen pitch of oriental desperation, or from the name of the founder of the dynasty, whom we have seen in his quiet collegiate days, at Naishápúr. One of the countless victims of the Assassin's dagger was Nizám-ul-Mulk himself, the old school-boy friend *.

* Some of Omar's Rubáiyát warn us of the danger of Greatness, the instability of Fortune, and while advocating Charity to all Men, recommending us to be too intimate with none. Attár makes Nizám-ul-Mulk use the very words of his friend Omar [Rub. xxviii.], "When Nizám-ul-Mulk was in the Agony (of Death) he said, 'Oh God! I am passing away in the hand of the Wind.'"

"Omar Khayyám also came to the Vizier to claim his share; but not to ask for title or office. 'The greatest boon 'you can confer on me,' he said, 'is to let me live in a corner 'under the shadow of your fortune, to spread wide the 'advantages of Science, and pray for your long life and 'prosperity.' The Vizier tells us, that, when he found Omar was really sincere in his refusal, he pressed him no further, but granted him a yearly pension of 1200 *mithkáls* of gold, from the treasury of Naisháp'úr.

"At Naisháp'úr thus lived and died Omar Khayyám, 'busied,' adds the Vizier, 'in winning knowledge of every kind, 'and especially in Astronomy, wherein he attained to a very 'high pre-eminence. Under the Sultanate of Malik Shah, he 'came to Merv, and obtained great praise for his proficiency 'in science, and the Sultan showered favours upon him.'

"When Malik Shah determined to reform the calendar, Omar was one of the eight learned men employed to do it; the result was the *Jaláli* era (so called from *Jalál-ud-din*, one of the king's names)—'a computation of time,' says Gibbon, 'which surpasses the Julian, and approaches the accuracy of the Gregorian style.' He is also the author of some astronomical tables, entitled Ziji-Malikshái," and the French have lately republished and translated an Arabic Treatise of his on Algebra.

"His Takhallus or poetical name (Khayyám) signifies a Tent-maker, and he is said to have at one time exercised that trade, perhaps before Nizám-ul-Mulk's generosity raised him to independence. Many Persian poets similarly derive their names from their occupations; thus we have Attár, 'a druggist,' Assár, 'an oil presser,' &c.* Omar himself alludes to his name in the following whimsical lines :—

* Though all these, like our Smiths, Archers, Millers, Fletchers, &c., may simply retain the Surname of an hereditary calling.

'Khayyám, who stitched the tents of science,
Has fallen in grief's furnace and been suddenly burned;
The shears of Fate have cut the tent ropes of his life,
And the broker of Hope has sold him for nothing!'

"We have only one more anecdote to give of his Life, and that relates to the close; it is told in the anonymous preface which is sometimes prefixed to his poems; it has been printed in the Persian in the Appendix to Hyde's *Veterum Persarum Religio*, p. 499; and D'Herbelot alludes to it in his Bibliothèque, under *Khiam* *:—

"'It is written in the chronicles of the ancients that this 'King of the Wise, Omar Khayyám, died at Naishápúr in 'the year of the Hegira, 517 (A.D. 1123); in science he was 'unrivalled,—the very paragon of his age. Khwájah Nizámi 'of Samarcand, who was one of his pupils, relates the 'following story: 'I often used to hold conversations with 'my teacher, Omar Khayyám, in a garden; and one day he 'said to me, 'My tomb shall be in a spot where the north 'wind may scatter roses over it.' I wondered at the words 'he spake, but I knew that his were no idle words †. Years 'after, when I chanced to revisit Naishápúr, I went to his 'final resting-place, and lo! it was just outside a garden, and

* "Philosophe Musulman qui a vêcu en Odeur de Sainteté dans sa Religion, vers la Fin du premier et le Commencement du second Siècle," no part of which, except the "Philosophe," can apply to our Khayyám.

† The Rashness of the Words, according to D'Herbelot, consisted in being so opposed to those in the Korán: "No Man knows where he shall die."—This story of Omar reminds me of another so naturally—and when one remembers how wide of his humble mark the noble sailor aimed—so pathetically told by Captain Cook—not by Doctor Hawkesworth—in his Second Voyage (i. 374). When leaving Ulietea, "Oreo's last request was for me to return. When he saw he could not obtain that promise, he asked the name of my *Marai* (burying-place).

'trees laden with fruit stretched their boughs over the garden 'wall, and dropped their flowers upon his tomb, so that the 'stone was hidden under them.'"

Thus far—without fear of Trespass—from the *Calcutta Review*. The writer of it, on reading in India this story of Omar's Grave, was reminded, he says, of Cicero's Account of finding Archimedes' Tomb at Syracuse, buried in grass and weeds. I think Thorwaldsen desired to have roses grow over him; a wish religiously fulfilled for him to the present day, I believe. However, to return to Omar.

Though the Sultan "shower'd Favours upon him," Omar's Epicurean Audacity of Thought and Speech caused him to be regarded askance in his own Time and Country. He is said to have been especially hated and dreaded by the Súfis, whose Practice he ridiculed, and whose Faith amounts to little more than his own, when stript of the Mysticism and formal recognition of Islamism under which Omar would not hide. Their Poets, including Háfiz, who are (with the exception of Firdausi) the most considerable in Persia, borrowed largely, indeed, of Omar's material, but turning it to a mystical Use more convenient to Themselves and the People they addressed; a People quite as quick of Doubt as of Belief; as keen of Bodily Sense as of Intellectual; and delighting in a cloudy composition of both, in which they could float luxuriously between Heaven and Earth, and this

As strange a question as this was, I hesitated not a moment to tell him 'Stepney;' the parish in which I live when in London. I was made to repeat it several times over till they could pronounce it; and then 'Stepney Marai no Toote' was echoed through an hundred mouths at once. I afterwards found the same question had been put to Mr Forster by a man on shore; but he gave a different, and indeed more proper answer, by saying, 'No man who used the sea could say where he should be buried.'"

World and the Next, on the wings of a poetical expression, that might serve indifferently for either. Omar was too honest of Heart as well as of Head for this. Having failed (however mistakenly) of finding any Providence but Destiny, and any World but This, he set about making the most of it; preferring rather to soothe the Soul through the Senses into Acquiescence with Things as he saw them, than to perplex it with vain disquietude after what they *might* be. It has been seen, however, that his Worldly Ambition was not exorbitant; and he very likely takes a humorous or perverse pleasure in exalting the gratification of Sense above that of the Intellect, in which he must have taken great delight, although it failed to answer the Questions in which he, in common with all men, was most vitally interested.

For whatever Reason, however, Omar, as before said, has never been popular in his own Country, and therefore has been but scantily transmitted abroad. The MSS. of his Poems, mutilated beyond the average Casualties of Oriental Transcription, are so rare in the East as scarce to have reacht Westward at all, in spite of all the acquisitions of Arms and Science. There is no copy at the India House, none at the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris. We know but of one in England: No. 140 of the Ouseley MSS. at the Bodleian, written at Shiráz, A.D. 1460. This contains but 158 Rubáiyát. One in the Asiatic Society's Library at Calcutta (of which we have a Copy), contains (and yet incomplete) 516, though swelled to that by all kinds of Repetition and Corruption. So Von Hammer speaks of *his* Copy as containing about 200, while Dr. Sprenger catalogues the Lucknow MS. at double that number*. The Scribes,

* "Since this Paper was written (adds the Reviewer in a note), "we have met with a Copy of a very rare Edition, printed at Calcutta

too, of the Oxford and Calcutta MSS. seem to do their Work under a sort of Protest; each beginning with a Tetrastich (whether genuine or not), taken out of its alphabetical order; the Oxford with one of Apology; the Calcutta with one of Expostulation, supposed (says a Notice prefixed to the MS.) to have arisen from a Dream, in which Omar's mother asked about his future fate. It may be rendered thus:—

"Oh Thou who burn'st in Heart for those who burn
"In Hell, whose fires thyself shall feed in turn;
"How long be crying, 'Mercy on them, God!'
"Why, who art Thou to teach, and He to learn?"

The Bodleian Quatrain pleads Pantheism by way of Justification.

"If I myself upon a looser Creed
"Have loosely strung the Jewel of Good deed,
"Let this one thing for my Atonement plead:
"That One for Two I never did mis-read."

The Reviewer*, to whom I owe the Particulars of Omar's Life, concludes his Review by comparing him with Lucretius, both as to natural Temper and Genius, and as acted upon by the Circumstances in which he lived. Both indeed were men of subtle, strong, and cultivated Intellect, fine Imagination, and Hearts passionate for Truth and Justice; who justly revolted from their Country's false Religion, and false, or foolish, Devotion to it; but who fell short of replacing what they subverted by such better *Hope* as others, with no better Revelation to guide them, had yet made a Law to themselves. Lucretius, indeed, with such material as

in 1836. This contains 438 Tetrastichs, with an Appendix containing 54 others not found in some MSS."

* Professor Cowell.

Epicurus furnished, satisfied himself with the theory of a vast machine fortuitously constructed, and acting by a Law that implied no Legislator; and so composing himself into a Stoical rather than Epicurean severity of Attitude, sat down to contemplate the mechanical Drama of the Universe which he was part Actor in; himself and all about him (as in his own sublime description of the Roman Theatre) discoloured with the lurid reflex of the Curtain suspended between the Spectator and the Sun. Omar, more desperate, or more careless of any so complicated System as resulted in nothing but hopeless Necessity, flung his own Genius and Learning with a bitter or humorous jest into the general Ruin which their insufficient glimpses only served to reveal; and, pretending sensual pleasure as the serious purpose of Life, only *diverted* himself with speculative problems of Deity, Destiny, Matter and Spirit, Good and Evil, and other such questions, easier to start than to run down, and the pursuit of which becomes a very weary sport at last!

With regard to the present Translation. The original Rubáiyát (as, missing an Arabic Guttural, these *Tetrastichs* are more musically called) are independent Stanzas, consisting each of four Lines of equal, though varied, Prosody; sometimes *all* rhyming, but oftener (as here imitated) the third line a blank. Somewhat as in the Greek Alcaic, where the penultimate line seems to lift and suspend the Wave that falls over in the last. As usual with such kind of Oriental Verse, the Rubáiyát follow one another according to Alphabetic Rhyme—a strange succession of Grave and Gay. Those here selected are strung into something of an Eclogue, with perhaps a less than equal proportion of the "Drink and make-merry," which (genuine or not) recurs over-frequently in the Original. Either way, the Result is

sad enough: saddest perhaps when most ostentatiously merry: more apt to move Sorrow than Anger toward the old Tentmaker, who, after vainly endeavouring to unshackle his Steps from Destiny, and to catch some authentic Glimpse of To-morrow, fell back upon To-day (which has outlasted so many To-morrows!) as the only Ground he had got to stand upon, however momentarily slipping from under his Feet.

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While the second Edition of this version of Omar was preparing, Monsieur Nicolas, French Consul at Resht, published a very careful and very good Edition of the Text, from a lithograph copy at Teheran, comprising 464 Rubáiyát, with translation and notes of his own.

Mons. Nicolas, whose Edition has reminded me of several things, and instructed me in others, does not consider Omar to be the material Epicurean that I have literally taken him for, but a Mystic, shadowing the Deity under the figure of Wine, Wine-bearer, &c., as Háfiz is supposed to do; in short, a Súfi Poet like Háfiz and the rest.

I cannot see reason to alter my opinion, formed as it was more than a dozen years ago* when Omar was first shown me by one to whom I am indebted for all I know of Oriental, and very much of other, literature. He admired Omar's Genius so much, that he would gladly have adopted any such Interpretation of his meaning as Mons. Nicolas' if he could†. That he could not, appears by his Paper in the Calcutta Review already so largely quoted; in which he

* [This was written in 1868. W. A. W.]

† Perhaps would have edited the Poems himself some years ago. He may now as little approve of my Version on one side, as of Mons. Nicholas' Theory on the other.

argues from the Poems themselves, as well as from what records remain of the Poet's Life.

And if more were needed to disprove Mons. Nicolas' Theory, there is the Biographical Notice which he himself has drawn up in direct contradiction to the Interpretation of the Poems given in his Notes. (See pp. xiii–xiv. of his Preface.) Indeed I hardly knew poor Omar was so far gone till his Apologist informed me. For here we see that, whatever were the Wine that Háfiz drank and sang, the veritable Juice of the Grape it was which Omar used, not only when carousing with his friends, but (says Mons. Nicolas) in order to excite himself to that pitch of Devotion which others reached by cries and "hurlemens." And yet, whenever Wine, Wine-bearer, &c. occur in the text—which is often enough—Mons. Nicolas carefully annotates "Dieu," "La Divinité," &c.: so carefully indeed that one is tempted to think that he was indoctrinated by the Súfi with whom he read the Poems. (Note to Rub. ii. p. 8.) A Persian would naturally wish to vindicate a distinguished Countryman; and a Súfi to enrol him in his own sect, which already comprises all the chief Poets of Persia.

What historical Authority has Mons. Nicolas to show that Omar gave himself up "avec passion à l'étude de la philosophie des Soufis"? (Preface, p. xiii.) The Doctrines of Pantheism, Materialism, Necessity, &c., were not peculiar to the Súfi; nor to Lucretius before them; nor to Epicurus before him; probably the very original Irreligion of Thinking men from the first; and very likely to be the spontaneous growth of a Philosopher living in an Age of social and political barbarism, under shadow of one of the Two and Seventy Religions supposed to divide the world. Von Hammer (according to Sprenger's Oriental Catalogue) speaks of Omar as "a Free-thinker, and *a great opponent*

*of Sufism;*" perhaps because, while holding much of their Doctrine, he would not pretend to any inconsistent severity of morals. Sir W. Ouseley has written a note to something of the same effect on the fly-leaf of the Bodleian MS. And in two Rubáiyát of Mons. Nicolas' own Edition Súf and Súfi are both disparagingly named.

No doubt many of these Quatrains seem unaccountable unless mystically interpreted; but many more as unaccountable unless literally. Were the Wine spiritual, for instance, how wash the Body with it when dead? Why make cups of the dead clay to be filled with—"La Divinité"—by some succeeding Mystic? Mons. Nicolas himself is puzzled by some "bizarres" and "trop Orientales" allusions and images—"d'une sensualité quelquefois révoltante" indeed—which "les convenances" do not permit him to translate; but still which the reader cannot but refer to "La Divinité*." No doubt also many of the Quatrains in the Teheran, as in the Calcutta, Copies, are spurious; such *Rubáiyát* being the common form of Epigram in Persia. But this, at best, tells as much one way as another; nay, the Súfi, who may be considered the Scholar and Man of Letters in Persia, would be far more likely than the careless Epicure to inter-

* A Note to Quatrain 234 admits that, however clear the mystical meaning of such Images must be to Europeans, they are not quoted without "rougissant" even by laymen in Persia—"Quant aux termes de tendresse qui commencent ce quatrain, comme tant d'autres dans ce recueil, nos lecteurs, habitués maintenant á l'étrangeté des expressions si souvent employés par Khéyam pour rendre ses pensées sur l'amour divin, et à la singularité de ses images trop orientales, d'une sensualité quelquefois révoltante, n'auront pas de peine à se persuader qu'il s'agit de la Divinité, bien que cette conviction soit vivement discutée par les moullahs musulmans et même par beaucoup de laïques, qui rougissent véritablement d'une pareille licence de leur compatriote à l'égard des choses spirituelles."

polate what favours his own view of the Poet. I observe that very few of the more mystical Quatrians are in the Bodleian MS. which must be one of the oldest, as dated at Shiraz, A.H. 865, A.D. 1460. And this, I think, especially distinguishes Omar (I cannot help calling him by his—no, not Christian—familiar name) from all other Persian Poets: That, whereas with them the Poet is lost in his Song, the Man in Allegory and Abstraction; we seem to have the Man—the *Bonhomme*—Omar himself, with all his Humours and Passions, as frankly before us as if we were really at Table with him, after the Wine had gone round.

I must say that I, for one, never wholly believed in the Mysticism of Háfiz. It does not appear there was any danger in holding and singing Súfi Pantheism, so long as the Poet made his Salaam to Mohammed at the beginning and end of his Song. Under such conditions Jeláluddín, Jámí, Attár, and others sang; using Wine and Beauty indeed as Images to illustrate, not as a Mask to hide, the Divinity they were celebrating. Perhaps some Allegory less liable to mistake or abuse had been better among so inflammable a People: much more so when, as some think with Háfiz and Omar, the abstract is not only likened to, but identified with, the sensual Image; hazardous, if not to the Devotee himself, yet to his weaker Brethren; and worse for the Profane in proportion as the Devotion of the Initiated grew warmer. And all for what? To be tantalized with Images of sensual enjoyment which must be renounced if one would approximate a God, who according to the Doctrine, *is* Sensual Matter as well as Spirit, and into whose Universe one expects unconsciously to merge after Death, without hope of any posthumous Beatitude in another world to compensate for all one's self-denial in this. Lucretius' blind Divinity certainly merited, and probably

got, as much self-sacrifice as this of the Súfi; and the burden of Omar's Song—if not "Let us eat"—is assuredly—"Let us drink, for Tomorrow we die!" And if Háfiz meant quite otherwise by a similar language, he surely miscalculated when he devoted his Life and Genius to so equivocal a Psalmody as, from his Day to this, has been said and sung by any rather than Spiritual Worshippers.

However, as there is some traditional presumption, and certainly the opinion of some learned men, in favour of Omar's being a Súfí—and even something of a Saint—those who please may so interpret his Wine and Cupbearer. On the other hand, as there is far more historical certainty of his being a Philosopher, of scientific Insight and Ability far beyond that of the Age and Country he lived in; of such moderate worldly Ambition as becomes a Philosopher, and such moderate wants as rarely satisfy a Debauchee; other readers may be content to believe with me that, while the Wine Omar celebrates is simply the Juice of the Grape, he bragged more than he drank of it, in very defiance perhaps of that Spiritual Wine which left its Votaries sunk in Hypocrisy or Disgust.

# RUBÁIYÁT

OF

# OMAR KHAYYÁM OF NAISHÁPÚR.

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I.

WAKE! For the Sun, who scatter'd into flight
The Stars before him from the Field of Night,
  Drives Night along with them from Heav'n, and strikes
The Sultán's Turret with a Shaft of Light.

II.

Before the phantom of False morning died,
Methought a Voice within the Tavern cried,
  "When all the Temple is prepared within,
"Why nods the drowsy Worshipper outside?"

III.

And, as the Cock crew, those who stood before
The Tavern shouted—"Open then the Door!
  "You know how little while we have to stay,
"And, once departed, may return no more."

IV.

Now the New Year reviving old Desires,
The thoughtful Soul to Solitude retires,
Where the WHITE HAND OF MOSES on the Bough
Puts out, and Jesus from the Ground suspires.

V.

Iram indeed is gone with all his Rose,
And Jamshyd's Sev'n-ring'd Cup where no one knows;
But still a Ruby kindles in the Vine,
And many a Garden by the Water blows.

VI.

And David's lips are lockt; but in divine
High-piping Pehleví, with "Wine! Wine! Wine!
"Red Wine!"—the Nightingale cries to the Rose
That sallow cheek of hers to' incarnadine.

VII.

Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring
Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling:
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To flutter—and the Bird is on the Wing.

VIII.

Whether at Naishápúr or Babylon,
Whether the Cup with sweet or bitter run,
The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by drop,
The Leaves of Life keep falling one by one.

IX.

Each Morn a thousand Roses brings, you say;
Yes, but where leaves the Rose of Yesterday?
And this first Summer month that brings the Rose
Shall take Jamshyd and Kaikobád awa

X.

Well, let it take them! What have we to do
With Kaikobád the Great, or Kaikhosrú?
Let Zál and Rustum bluster as they will,
Or Hátim call to Supper—heed not you.

XI.

With me along the strip of Herbage strown
That just divides the desert from the sown,
Where name of Slave and Sultán is forgot—
And Peace to Mahmúd on his golden Throne!

XII.

A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!

XIII.

Some for the Glories of This World; and some
Sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to come;
Ah, take the Cash, and let the Credit go,
Nor heed the rumble of a distant Drum!

XIV.

Look to the blowing Rose about us—"Lo,
"Laughing," she says, "into the world I blow,
"At once the silken tassel of my Purse
"Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw."

XV.

And those who husbanded the Golden grain,
And those who flung it to the winds like Rain,
Alike to no such aureate Earth are turn'd
As, buried once, Men want dug up again.

XVI.

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon
Turns Ashes—or it prospers; and anon,
Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face,
Lighting a little hour or two—is gone.

XVII.

Think, in this batter'd Caravanserai
Whose Portals are alternate Night and Day,
How Sultán after Sultán with his Pomp
Abode his destined Hour, and went his way.

XVIII.

They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep:
And Bahrám, that great Hunter—the Wild Ass
Stamps o'er his Head, but cannot break his Sleep.

XIX.

I sometimes think that never blows so red
The Rose as where some buried Cæsar bled;
That every Hyacinth the Garden wears
Dropt in her Lap from some once lovely Head.

XX.

And this reviving Herb whose tender Green
Fledges the River-Lip on which we lean—
Ah, lean upon it lightly! for who knows
From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen!

XXI.

Ah, my Belovéd, fill the Cup that clears
To-day of past Regrets and future Fears:
*To-morrow!*—Why, To-morrow I may be
Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n thousand Years.

XXII.

For some we loved, the loveliest and the best
That from his Vintage rolling Time hath prest,
Have drunk their Cup a Round or two before,
And one by one crept silently to rest.

XXIII.

And we, that now make merry in the Room
They left, and Summer dresses in new bloom,
Ourselves must we beneath the Couch of Earth
Descend—ourselves to make a Couch—for whom?

XXIV.

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the Dust descend;
Dust into Dust, and under Dust to lie,
Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and—sans End!

XXV.

Alike for those who for TO-DAY prepare,
And those that after some TO-MORROW stare,
A Muezzín from the Tower of Darkness cries,
"Fools! your Reward is neither Here nor There."

XXVI.

Why, all the Saints and Sages who discuss'd
Of the Two Worlds so wisely—they are thrust
Like foolish Prophets forth; their Words to Scorn
Are scatter'd, and their Mouths are stopt with Dust.

XXVII.

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument
About it and about: but evermore
Came out by the same door where in I went.

XXVIII.

With them the seed of Wisdom did I sow,
And with mine own hand wrought to make it grow;
And this was all the Harvest that I reap'd—
"I came like Water, and like Wind I go."

XXIX.

Into this Universe, and *Why* not knowing
Nor *Whence*, like Water willy-nilly flowing;
And out of it, as Wind along the Waste,
I know not *Whither*, willy-nilly blowing.

XXX.

What, without asking, hither hurried *Whence?*
And, without asking, *Whither* hurried hence!
Oh, many a Cup of this forbidden Wine
Must drown the memory of that insolence!

XXXI.

Up from Earth's Centre through the Seventh Gate
I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn sate,
And many a Knot unravel'd by the Road;
But not the Master-knot of Human Fate.

XXXII.

There was the Door to which I found no Key;
There was the Veil through which I might not see:
Some little talk awhile of ME and THEE
There was—and then no more of THEE and ME.

XXXIII.

Earth could not answer; nor the Seas that mourn
In flowing Purple, of their Lord forlorn;
Nor rolling Heaven, with all his Signs reveal'd
And hidden by the sleeve of Night and Morn.

XXXIV.

Then of the THEE IN ME who works behind
The Veil, I lifted up my hands to find
A lamp amid the Darkness; and I heard,
As from Without—"THE ME WITHIN THEE BLIND!"

XXXV.

Then to the Lip of this poor earthen Urn
I lean'd, the Secret of my Life to learn:
And Lip to Lip it murmur'd—"While you live,
"Drink!—for, once dead, you never shall return."

XXXVI.

I think the Vessel, that with fugitive
Articulation answer'd, once did live,
And drink; and Ah! the passive Lip I kiss'd,
How many Kisses might it take—and give!

XXXVII.

For I remember stopping by the way
To watch a Potter thumping his wet Clay:
And with its all-obliterated Tongue
It murmur'd—"Gently, Brother, gently, pray!"

XXXVIII.

And has not such a Story from of Old
Down Man's successive generations roll'd
Of such a clod of saturated Earth
Cast by the Maker into Human mould?

XXXIX.

And not a drop that from our Cups we throw
For Earth to drink of, but may steal below
To quench the fire of Anguish in some Eye
There hidden—far beneath, and long ago.

XL.

As then the Tulip for her morning sup
Of Heav'nly Vintage from the soil looks up,
Do you devoutly do the like, till Heav'n
To Earth invert you—like an empty Cup.

XLI.

Perplext no more with Human or Divine,
To-morrow's tangle to the winds resign,
And lose your fingers in the tresses of
The Cypress-slender Minister of Wine.

XLII.

And if the Wine you drink, the Lip you press,
End in what All begins and ends in—Yes;
Think then you are To-day what Yesterday
You were—To-morrow you shall not be less.

XLIII.

So when that Angel of the darker Drink
At last shall find you by the river-brink,
And, offering his Cup, invite your Soul
Forth to your Lips to quaff—you shall not shrink.

XLIV.

Why, if the Soul can fling the Dust aside,
And naked on the Air of Heaven ride,
Were't not a Shame—were't not a Shame for him
In this clay carcase crippled to abide?

XLV.

'Tis but a Tent where takes his one day's rest
A Sultán to the realm of Death addrest;
The Sultán rises, and the dark Ferrásh
Strikes, and prepares it for another Guest.

XLVI.

And fear not lest Existence closing your
Account, and mine, should know the like no more;
The Eternal Sákí from that Bowl has pour'd
Millions of Bubbles like us, and will pour.

XLVII.

When You and I behind the Veil are past,
Oh, but the long, long while the World shall last,
Which of our Coming and Departure heeds
As the Sea's self should heed a pebble-cast.

XLVIII.

A Moment's Halt—a momentary taste
Of BEING from the Well amid the Waste—
And Lo!—the phantom Caravan has reach'd
The NOTHING it set out from—Oh, make haste!

XLIX.

Would you that spangle of Existence spend
About THE SECRET—quick about it, Friend!
A Hair perhaps divides the False and True—
And upon what, prithee, may life depend?

L.

A Hair perhaps divides the False and True;
Yes; and a single Alif were the clue—
Could you but find it—to the Treasure-house,
And peradventure to THE MASTER too;

LI.

Whose secret Presence, through Creation's veins
Running Quicksilver-like eludes your pains;
Taking all shapes from Máh to Máhi; and
They change and perish all—but He remains;

LII.

A moment guess'd—then back behind the Fold
Immerst of Darkness round the Drama roll'd
  Which, for the Pastime of Eternity,
He doth Himself contrive, enact, behold.

LIII.

But if in vain, down on the stubborn floor
Of Earth, and up to Heav'n's unopening Door,
  You gaze To-DAY, while You are You—how then
To-MORROW, You when shall be You no more?

LIV.

Waste not your Hour, nor in the vain pursuit
Of This and That endeavour and dispute;
  Better be jocund with the fruitful Grape
Than sadden after none, or bitter, Fruit.

LV.

You know, my Friends, with what a brave Carouse
I made a Second Marriage in my house;
  Divorced old barren Reason from my Bed,
And took the Daughter of the Vine to Spouse.

LVI.

For "Is" and "Is-NOT" though with Rule and Line
And "UP-AND-DOWN" by Logic I define,
  Of all that one should care to fathom, I
Was never deep in anything but—Wine.

LVII.

Ah, but my Computations, People say,
Reduced the Year to better reckoning?—Nay,
  'Twas only striking from the Calendar
Unborn To-morrow, and dead Yesterday.

LVIII.

And lately, by the Tavern Door agape,
Came shining through the Dusk an Angel Shape
Bearing a Vessel on his Shoulder; and
He bid me taste of it; and 'twas—the Grape!

LIX.

The Grape that can with Logic absolute
The Two-and-Seventy jarring Sects confute:
The sovereign Alchemist that in a trice
Life's leaden metal into Gold transmute:

LX.

The mighty Mahmúd, Allah-breathing Lord,
That all the misbelieving and black Horde
Of Fears and Sorrows that infest the Soul
Scatters before him with his whirlwind Sword.

LXI.

Why, be this Juice the growth of God, who dare
Blaspheme the twisted tendril as a Snare?
A Blessing, we should use it, should we not?
And if a Curse—why, then, Who set it there?

LXII.

I must abjure the Balm of Life, I must,
Scared by some After-reckoning ta'en on trust,
Or lured with Hope of some Diviner Drink,
To fill the Cup—when crumbled into Dust!

LXIII.

Oh threats of Hell and Hopes of Paradise!
One thing at least is certain—*This* Life flies;
One thing is certain and the rest is Lies;
The Flower that once has blown for ever dies.

LXIV.

Strange, is it not? that of the myriads who
Before us pass'd the door of Darkness through,
Not one returns to tell us of the Road,
Which to discover we must travel too.

LXV.

The Revelations of Devout and Learn'd
Who rose before us, and as Prophets burn'd,
Are all but Stories, which, awoke from Sleep
They told their comrades, and to Sleep return'd.

LXVI.

I sent my Soul through the Invisible,
Some letter of that After-life to spell:
And by and by my Soul return'd to me,
And answer'd "I Myself am Heav'n and Hell:"

LXVII.

Heav'n but the Vision of fulfill'd Desire,
And Hell the Shadow from a Soul on fire,
Cast on the Darkness into which Ourselves,
So late emerged from, shall so soon expire.

LXVIII.

We are no other than a moving row
Of Magic Shadow-shapes that come and go
Round with the Sun-illumined Lantern held
In Midnight by the Master of the Show;

LXIX.

But helpless Pieces of the Game He plays
Upon this Chequer-board of Nights and Days;
Hither and thither moves, and checks, and slays,
And one by one back in the Closet lays.

LXX.

The Ball no question makes of Ayes and Noes,
But Here or There as strikes the Player goes;
And He that toss'd you down into the Field,
*He* knows about it all—HE knows—HE knows!

LXXI.

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.

LXXII.

And that inverted Bowl they call the Sky,
Whereunder crawling coop'd we live and die,
Lift not your hands to *It* for help—for It
As impotently moves as you or I.

LXXIII.

With Earth's first Clay They did the Last Man knead,
And there of the Last Harvest sow'd the Seed:
And the first Morning of Creation wrote
What the Last Dawn of Reckoning shall read.

LXXIV.

YESTERDAY *This* Day's Madness did prepare;
TO-MORROW's Silence, Triumph, or Despair:
Drink! for you know not whence you came, nor why:
Drink! for you know not why you go, nor where.

LXXV.

I tell you this—When, started from the Goal,
Over the flaming shoulders of the Foal
Of Heav'n Parwín and Mushtarí they flung,
In my predestined Plot of Dust and Soul

LXXVI.

The Vine had struck a fibre: which about
If clings my Being—let the Dervish flout;
Of my Base metal may be filed a Key,
That shall unlock the Door he howls without.

LXXVII.

And this I know: whether the one True Light
Kindle to Love, or Wrath-consume me quite,
One Flash of It within the Tavern caught
Better than in the Temple lost outright.

LXXVIII.

What! out of senseless Nothing to provoke
A conscious Something to resent the yoke
Of unpermitted Pleasure, under pain
Of Everlasting Penalties, if broke!

LXXIX.

What! from his helpless Creature be repaid
Pure Gold for what he lent him dross-allay'd—
Sue for a Debt he never did contract,
And cannot answer—Oh the sorry trade!

LXXX.

Oh Thou, who didst with pitfall and with gin
Beset the Road I was to wander in,
Thou wilt not with Predestined Evil round
Enmesh, and then impute my Fall to Sin!

LXXXI.

Oh Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make,
And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake:
For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man
Is blacken'd—Man's forgiveness give—and take!

* * * * * *

LXXXII.

As under cover of departing Day
Slunk hunger-stricken Ramazán away,
Once more within the Potter's house alone
I stood, surrounded by the Shapes of Clay.

LXXXIII.

Shapes of all Sorts and Sizes, great and small,
That stood along the floor and by the wall;
And some loquacious Vessels were; and some
Listen'd perhaps, but never talk'd at all.

LXXXIV.

Said one among them—"Surely not in vain
"My substance of the common Earth was ta'en
"And to this Figure moulded, to be broke,
"Or trampled back to shapeless Earth again."

LXXXV.

Then said a Second—"Ne'er a peevish Boy
"Would break the Bowl from which he drank in joy;
"And He that with his hand the Vessel made
"Will surely not in after Wrath destroy."

LXXXVI.

After a momentary silence spake
Some Vessel of a more ungainly Make;
"They sneer at me for leaning all awry:
"What! did the Hand then of the Potter shake?"

LXXXVII.

Whereat some one of the loquacious Lot—
I think a Súfi pipkin—waxing hot—
"All this of Pot and Potter—Tell me then,
"Who is the Potter, pray, and who the Pot?"

LXXXVIII.

"Why," said another, "Some there are who tell
"Of one who threatens he will toss to Hell
"The luckless Pots he marr'd in making—Pish!
"He's a Good Fellow, and 't will all be well."

LXXXIX.

"Well," murmur'd one, "Let whoso make or buy,
"My Clay with long Oblivion is gone dry:
"But fill me with the old familiar Juice,
"Methinks I might recover by and by."

XC.

So while the Vessels one by one were speaking,
The little Moon look'd in that all were seeking:
And then they jogg'd each other, "Brother! Brother!
"Now for the Porter's shoulder-knot a-creaking!"

* * * * * *

XCI.

Ah, with the Grape my fading Life provide,
And wash the Body whence the Life has died,
And lay me, shrouded in the living Leaf,
By some not unfrequented Garden-side.

XCII.

That ev'n my buried Ashes such a snare
Of Vintage shall fling up into the Air
As not a True-believer passing by
But shall be overtaken unaware.

XCIII.

Indeed the Idols I have loved so long
Have done my credit in this World much wrong:
Have drown'd my Glory in a shallow Cup,
And sold my Reputation for a Song.

XCIV.

Indeed, indeed, Repentance oft before
I swore—but was I sober when I swore?
And then and then came Spring, and Rose-in-hand
My thread-bare Penitence apieces tore.

XCV.

And much as Wine has play'd the Infidel,
And robb'd me of my Robe of Honour—Well,
I wonder often what the Vintners buy
One half so precious as the stuff they sell.

XCVI.

Yet Ah, that Spring should vanish with the Rose!
That Youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!
The Nightingale that in the branches sang,
Ah whence, and whither flown again, who knows!

XCVII.

Would but the Desert of the Fountain yield
One glimpse—if dimly, yet indeed, reveal'd,
To which the fainting Traveller might spring,
As springs the trampled herbage of the field!

XCVIII.

Would but some wingéd Angel ere too late
Arrest the yet unfolded Roll of Fate,
And make the stern Recorder otherwise
Enregister, or quite obliterate!

XCIX.

Ah Love! could you and I with Him conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire!

* * * * * *

C.

Yon rising Moon that looks for us again—
How oft hereafter will she wax and wane;
How oft hereafter rising look for us
Through this same Garden—and for *one* in vain!

CI.

And when like her, oh Sákí, you shall pass
Among the Guests Star-scatter'd on the Grass,
And in your joyous errand reach the spot
Where I made One—turn down an empty Glass!

TAMAM.

# NOTES.

(Stanza II.) The "*False Dawn*;" *Subhi Kázib*, a transient Light on the Horizon about an hour before the *Subhi sádik*, or True Dawn; a well-known Phenomenon in the East.

(IV.) New Year. Beginning with the Vernal Equinox, it must be remembered; and (howsoever the old Solar Year is practically superseded by the clumsy *Lunar* Year that dates from the Mohammedan Hijra) still commemorated by a Festival that is said to have been appointed by the very Jamshyd whom Omar so often talks of, and whose yearly Calendar he helped to rectify.

"The sudden approach and rapid advance of the Spring," says Mr Binning[1], "are very striking. Before the Snow is well off the Ground, the Trees burst into Blossom, and the Flowers start forth from the Soil. At *Now Rooz* [*their* New Year's Day] the Snow was lying in patches on the Hills and in the shaded Vallies, while the Fruit-trees in the Gardens were budding beautifully, and green Plants and Flowers springing up on the Plains on every side—

> 'And on old Hyems' Chin and icy Crown
> 'An odorous Chaplet of sweet Summer buds
> 'Is, as in mockery, set.'—

Among the Plants newly appeared I recognised some old Acquaintances I had not seen for many a Year: among these, two varieties of the Thistle—a coarse species of Daisy like the 'Horse-gowan'—red and white Clover—the Dock—the blue Corn-flower—and that vulgar Herb the Dandelion rearing its yellow crest on the Banks of the Watercourses." The Nightingale was not yet heard, for the Rose was not yet blown: but an almost identical Blackbird and Woodpecker helped to make up something of a North-country Spring.

[1] *Two Years' Travel in Persia*, &c. i. 165.

"The White Hand of Moses." Exodus iv. 6; where Moses draws forth his Hand—not, according to the Persians, "*leprous as Snow*,"—but *white*, as our May-blossom in Spring perhaps. According to them also the Healing Power of Jesus resided in his Breath.

(v.) Iram, planted by King Shaddád, and now sunk somewhere in the Sands of Arabia. Jamshyd's Seven-ring'd Cup was typical of the 7 Heavens, 7 Planets, 7 Seas, &c., and was a *Divining Cup*.

(vi.) *Pehlevi*, the old Heroic *Sanskrit* of Persia. Háfiz also speaks of the Nightingale's *Pehlevi*, which did not change with the People's.

I am not sure if the fourth line refers to the Red Rose looking sickly, or to the Yellow Rose that ought to be Red; Red, White, and Yellow Roses all common in Persia. I think that Southey, in his Common-Place Book, quotes from some Spanish author about the Rose being White till 10 o'clock; "Rosa Perfecta" at 2; and "perfecta incarnada" at 5.

(x.) Rustum, the "Hercules" of Persia, and Zál his Father, whose exploits are among the most celebrated in the Sháh-náma. Hátim Tai, a well-known type of Oriental Generosity.

(xiii.) A Drum—beaten outside a Palace.

(xiv.) That is, the Rose's Golden Centre.

(xviii.) Persepolis: call'd also *Takht-i-Jamshyd*—The Throne of Jamshyd, "*King Splendid*," of the mythical *Peshdádian* Dynasty, and supposed (according to the Sháh-náma) to have been founded and built by him. Others refer it to the Work of the Genie King, Ján Ibn Ján—who also built the Pyramids—before the time of Adam.

Bahrám Gúr—*Bahram of the Wild Ass*—a Sassanian Sovereign—had also his Seven Castles (like the King of Bohemia!) each of a different Colour: each with a Royal Mistress within; each of whom tells him a Story, as told in one of the most famous Poems of Persia, written by Amír Khusraw: all these Sevens also figuring (according to Eastern Mysticism) the Seven Heavens; and perhaps the Book itself that Eighth, into which the mystical Seven transcend, and within which they revolve. The Ruins of Three of those Towers are yet shown by the Peasantry; as also the Swamp in which Bahrám sunk, like the Master of Ravenswood, while pursuing his *Gúr*.

> The Palace that to Heav'n his pillars threw,
> And Kings the forehead on his threshold drew—
> I saw the solitary Ringdove there,
> And "Coo, coo, coo," she cried; and "Coo, coo, coo."

This Quatrain Mr Binning found, among several of Háfiz and others, inscribed by some stray hand among the ruins of Persepolis. The Ringdove's ancient *Pehlevi Coo, Coo, Coo*, signifies also in Persian "*Where? Where? Where?*" In Attár's "Bird-parliament" she is reproved by the Leader of the Birds for sitting still, and for ever harping on that one note of lamentation for her lost Yúsuf.

Apropos of Omar's Red Roses in Stanza xix, I am reminded of an old English Superstition, that our Anemone Pulsatilla, or purple "Pasque Flower" (which grows plentifully about the Fleam Dyke, near Cambridge), grows only where Danish Blood has been spilt.

(XXI.) A thousand years to each Planet.

(XXXI.) Saturn, Lord of the Seventh Heaven.

(XXXII.) ME-AND-THEE: some dividual Existence or Personality distinct from the Whole.

(XXXVII.) One of the Persian Poets—Attár, I think—has a pretty story about this. A thirsty Traveller dips his hand into a Spring of Water to drink from. By-and-by comes another who draws up and drinks from an earthen Bowl, and then departs, leaving his Bowl behind him. The first Traveller takes it up for another draught; but is surprised to find that the same Water which had tasted sweet from his own hand tastes bitter from the earthen Bowl. But a Voice—from Heaven, I think—tells him the clay from which the Bowl is made was once *Man;* and, into whatever shape renewed, can never lose the bitter flavour of Mortality.

(XXXIX.) The custom of throwing a little Wine on the ground before drinking still continues in Persia, and perhaps generally in the East. Mons. Nicolas considers it "un signe de libéralité, et en même temps un avertissement que le buveur doit vider sa coupe jusqu'à la dernière goutte." Is it not more likely an ancient Superstition; a Libation to propitiate Earth, or make her an Accomplice in the illicit Revel? Or, perhaps, to divert the Jealous Eye by some sacrifice of superfluity, as with the Ancients of the West? With Omar we see something more is signified; the precious Liquor is not lost, but sinks into the ground to refresh the dust of some poor Wine-worshipper foregone.

Thus Háfiz, copying Omar in so many ways: "When thou drinkest Wine pour a draught on the ground. Wherefore fear the Sin which brings to another Gain?"

(XLIII.) According to one beautiful Oriental Legend, Azräel accom-

plishes his mission by holding to the nostril an Apple from the Tree of Life.

This and the two following Stanzas would have been withdrawn, as somewhat *de trop*, from the Text, but for advice which I least like to disregard.

(LI.) From Máh to Máhi; from Fish to Moon.

(LVI.) A Jest, of course, at his Studies. A curious mathematical Quatrain of Omar's has been pointed out to me; the more curious because almost exactly parallel'd by some Verses of Doctor Donne's, that are quoted in Izaak Walton's Lives! Here is Omar: "You and I are the image of a pair of compasses; though we have two heads (sc. our *feet*) we have one body; when we have fixed the centre for our circle, we bring our heads (sc. feet) together at the end." Dr Donne:

If we be two, we two are so
  As stiff twin-compasses are two;
Thy Soul, the fixt foot, makes no show
  To move, but does if the other do.

And though thine in the centre sit,
  Yet when my other far does roam,
Thine leans and hearkens after it,
  And grows erect as mine comes home.

Such thou must be to me, who must
  Like the other foot obliquely run;
Thy firmness makes my circle just,
  And me to end where I begun.

(LIX.) The Seventy-two Religions supposed to divide the World, *including* Islamism, as some think: but others not.

(LX.) Alluding to Sultan Mahmúd's Conquest of India and its dark people.

(LXVIII.) *Fánúsi khiyál*, a Magic-lantern still used in India; the cylindrical Interior being painted with various Figures, and so lightly poised and ventilated as to revolve round the lighted Candle within.

(LXX.) A very mysterious Line in the Original:

O dánad O dánad O dánad O ——

breaking off something like our Wood-pigeon's Note, which she is said to take up just where she left off.

(LXXV.) Parwín and Mushtarí—The Pleiads and Jupiter.

(LXXXVII.) This Relation of Pot and Potter to Man and his Maker figures far and wide in the Literature of the World, from the time of the Hebrew Prophets to the present; when it may finally take the name of "Pot theism," by which Mr Carlyle ridiculed Sterling's "Pantheism." *My* Sheikh, whose knowledge flows in from all quarters, writes to me—

"Apropos of old Omar's Pots, did I ever tell you the sentence I found in 'Bishop Pearson on the Creed'? 'Thus are we wholly at the disposal of His will, and our present and future condition framed and ordered by His free, but wise and just, decrees. *Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?* (Rom. ix. 21.) And can that earth-artificer have a freer power over his *brother potsherd* (both being made of the same metal), than God hath over him, who, by the strange fecundity of His omnipotent power, first made the clay out of nothing, and then him out of that?'"

And again—from a very different quarter—"I had to refer the other day to Aristophanes, and came by chance on a curious Speaking-pot story in the Vespæ, which I had quite forgotten.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Φιλοκλέων. | Ἄκουε, μὴ φεῦγ'· ἐν Συβάρει γυνή ποτε | l. 1435 |
| | κατέαξ' ἐχῖνον. | |
| Κατήγορος. | Ταῦτ' ἐγὼ μαρτύρομαι. | |
| Φι. | Οὐχῖνος οὖν ἔχων τιν' ἐπεμαρτύρατο· | |
| | Εἶθ' ἡ Συβαρῖτις εἶπεν, εἰ ναὶ τὰν κόραν | |
| | τὴν μαρτυρίαν ταύτην ἐάσας, ἐν τάχει | |
| | ἐπίδεσμον ἐπρίω, νοῦν ἂν εἶχες πλείονα. | |

"The Pot calls a bystander to be a witness to his bad treatment. The woman says, 'If, by Proserpine, instead of all this 'testifying' (comp. Cuddie and his mother in 'Old Mortality!') you would buy yourself a rivet, it would show more sense in you!' The Scholiast explains *echinus* as ἄγγος τι ἐκ κεράμου."

One more illustration for the oddity's sake from the "Autobiography of a Cornish Rector," by the late James Hamley Tregenna. 1871.

"There was one old Fellow in our Company—he was so like a Figure in the 'Pilgrim's Progress' that Richard always called him the 'ALLEGORY,' with a long white beard—a rare Appendage in those days—and a Face the colour of which seemed to have been baked in, like the Faces one used to see on Earthenware Jugs. In our Country-

dialect Earthenware is called '*Clome*'; so the Boys of the Village used to shout out after him—'Go back to the Potter, old Clome-face, and get baked over again.' For the 'Allegory,' though shrewd enough in most things, had the reputation of being '*saift-baked*,' i.e., of weak intellect."

(XC.) At the Close of the Fasting Month, Ramazán (which makes the Musulman unhealthy and unamiable), the first Glimpse of the New Moon (who rules their division of the Year), is looked for with the utmost Anxiety, and hailed with Acclamation. Then it is that the Porter's Knot may be heard—toward the *Cellar*. Omar has elsewhere a pretty Quatrain about the same Moon—

"Be of Good Cheer—the sullen Month will die,
"And a young Moon requite us by and by:
"Look how the Old one meagrè, bent, and wan
"With Age and Fast, is fainting from the Sky!"

[*The first Edition of the translation of Omar Khayyám, which appeared in* 1859, *differs so much from those which followed, that it has been thought better to print it in full, instead of attempting to record the differences.*]

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I.

AWAKE! for Morning in the Bowl of Night
Has flung the Stone that puts the Stars to Flight:
And Lo! the Hunter of the East has caught
The Sultán's Turret in a Noose of Light.

II.

Dreaming when Dawn's Left Hand was in the Sky
I heard a Voice within the Tavern cry,
"Awake, my Little ones, and fill the Cup
"Before Life's Liquor in its Cup be dry."

III.

And, as the Cock crew, those who stood before
The Tavern shouted—"Open then the Door!
"You know how little while we have to stay,
"And, once departed, may return no more."

IV.

Now the New Year reviving old Desires,
The thoughtful Soul to Solitude retires,
Where the WHITE HAND OF MOSES on the Bough
Puts out, and Jesus from the Ground suspires.

V.

Irám indeed is gone with all its Rose,
And Jamshýd's Sev'n-ring'd Cup where no one knows;
But still the Vine her ancient Ruby yields,
And still a Garden by the Water blows.

VI.

And David's Lips are lock't; but in divine
High piping Péhlevi, with "Wine! Wine! Wine!
"*Red* Wine!"—the Nightingale cries to the Rose
That yellow Cheek of her's to'incarnadine.

VII.

Come, fill the Cup, and in the Fire of Spring
The Winter Garment of Repentance fling:
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To fly—and Lo! the Bird is on the Wing.

VIII.

And look—a thousand Blossoms with the Day
Woke—and a thousand scatter'd into Clay:
And this first Summer Month that brings the Rose
Shall take Jamshýd and Kaikobád away.

IX.

But come with old Khayyám, and leave the Lot
Of Kaikobád and Kaikhosrú forgot:
Let Rustum lay about him as he will,
Or Hátim Tai cry Supper—heed them not.

X.

With me along some Strip of Herbage strown
That just divides the desert from the sown,
  Where name of Slave and Sultán scarce is known,
And pity Sultán Máhmúd on his Throne.

XI.

Here with a Loaf of Bread beneath the Bough,
A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse—and Thou
  Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
And Wilderness is Paradise enow.

XII.

"How sweet is mortal Sovranty!"—think some:
Others—"How blest the Paradise to come!"
  Ah, take the Cash in hand and wave the Rest;
Oh, the brave Music of a *distant* Drum!

XIII.

Look to the Rose that blows about us—"Lo,
"Laughing," she says, "into the World I blow:
  "At once the silken Tassel of my Purse
"Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw."

XIV.

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon
Turns Ashes—or it prospers; and anon,
  Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face
Lighting a little Hour or two—is gone.

XV.

And those who husbanded the Golden Grain,
And those who flung it to the Winds like Rain,
  Alike to no such aureate Earth are turn'd
As, buried once, Men want dug up again.

XVI.

Think, in this batter'd Caravanserai
Whose Doorways are alternate Night and Day,
How Sultán after Sultán with his Pomp
Abode his Hour or two, and went his way.

XVII.

They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshýd gloried and drank deep;
And Bahrám, that great Hunter—the Wild Ass
Stamps o'er his Head, and he lies fast asleep.

XVIII.

I sometimes think that never blows so red
The Rose as where some buried Cæsar bled;
That every Hyacinth the Garden wears
Dropt in its Lap from some once lovely Head.

XIX.

And this delightful Herb whose tender Green
Fledges the River's Lip on which we lean—
Ah, lean upon it lightly! for who knows
From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen!

XX.

Ah, my Belovéd, fill the Cup that clears
To-day of past Regrets and future Fears—
*To-morrow?*—Why, To-morrow I may be
Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n Thousand Years.

XXI.

Lo! some we loved, the loveliest and best
That Time and Fate of all their Vintage prest,
Have drunk their Cup a Round or two before,
And one by one crept silently to Rest.

XXII.

And we, that now make merry in the Room
They left, and Summer dresses in new Bloom,
Ourselves must we beneath the Couch of Earth
Descend, ourselves to make a Couch,—for whom?

XXIII.

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the Dust descend;
Dust into Dust, and under Dust, to lie,
Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and—sans End!

XXIV.

Alike for those who for TO-DAY prepare,
And those that after a TO-MORROW stare,
A Muezzín from the Tower of Darkness cries
"Fools! your Reward is neither Here nor There!"

XXV.

Why, all the Saints and Sages who discuss'd
Of the Two Worlds so learnedly, are thrust
Like foolish Prophets forth; their Words to Scorn
Are scatter'd, and their Mouths are stopt with Dust.

XXVI.

Oh, come with old Khayyám, and leave the Wise
To talk; one thing is certain, that Life flies;
One thing is certain, and the Rest is Lies;
The Flower that once has blown for ever dies.

XXVII.

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great Argument
About it and about: but evermore
Came out by the same Door as in I went.

XXVIII.

With them the Seed of Wisdom did I sow,
And with my own hand labour'd it to grow:
And this was all the Harvest that I reap'd—
"I came like Water, and like Wind I go."

XXIX.

Into this Universe, and *why* not knowing,
Nor *whence*, like Water willy-nilly flowing:
And out of it, as Wind along the Waste,
I know not *whither*, willy-nilly blowing.

XXX.

What, without asking, hither hurried *whence?*
And, without asking, *whither* hurried hence!
Another and another Cup to drown
The Memory of this Impertinence!

XXXI.

Up from Earth's Centre through the Seventh Gate
I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn sate,
And many Knots unravel'd by the Road;
But not the Knot of Human Death and Fate.

XXXII.

There was a Door to which I found no Key:
There was a Veil past which I could not see:
Some little Talk awhile of ME and THEE
There seem'd—and then no more of THEE and ME.

XXXIII.

Then to the rolling Heav'n itself I cried,
Asking, "What Lamp had Destiny to guide
"Her little Children stumbling in the Dark?"
And—"A blind Understanding!" Heav'n replied.

XXXIV.

Then to this earthen Bowl did I adjourn
My Lip the secret Well of Life to learn:
And Lip to Lip it murmur'd—"While you live
"Drink!—for once dead you never shall return."

XXXV.

I think the Vessel, that with fugitive
Articulation answer'd, once did live,
And merry-make; and the cold Lip I kiss'd
How many Kisses might it take—and give!

XXXVI.

For in the Market-place, one Dusk of Day,
I watch'd the Potter thumping his wet Clay:
And with its all obliterated Tongue
It murmur'd—"Gently, Brother, gently, pray!"

XXXVII.

Ah, fill the Cup:—what boots it to repeat
How Time is slipping underneath our Feet:
Unborn TO-MORROW, and dead YESTERDAY,
Why fret about them if TO-DAY be sweet!

XXXVIII.

One Moment in Annihilation's Waste,
One Moment, of the Well of Life to taste—
The Stars are setting and the Caravan
Starts for the Dawn of Nothing—Oh, make haste!

XXXIX.

How long, how long, in infinite Pursuit
Of This and That endeavour and dispute?
Better be merry with the fruitful Grape
Than sadden after none, or bitter, Fruit.

XL.

You know, my Friends, how long since in my House
For a new Marriage I did make Carouse:
  Divorced old barren Reason from my Bed,
And took the Daughter of the Vine to Spouse.

XLI.

For "Is" and "Is-not" though *with* Rule and Line,
And "Up-and-down" *without*, I could define,
  I yet in all I only cared to know,
Was never deep in anything but—Wine.

XLII.

And lately, by the Tavern Door agape,
Came stealing through the Dusk an Angel Shape
  Bearing a Vessel on his Shoulder; and
He bid me taste of it; and 'twas—the Grape!

XLIII.

The Grape that can with Logic absolute
The Two-and-Seventy jarring Sects confute:
  The subtle Alchemist that in a Trice
Life's leaden Metal into Gold transmute.

XLIV.

The mighty Mahmúd, the victorious Lord,
That all the misbelieving and black Horde
  Of Fears and Sorrows that infest the Soul
Scatters and slays with his enchanted Sword.

XLV.

But leave the Wise to wrangle, and with me
The Quarrel of the Universe let be:
  And, in some corner of the Hubbub coucht,
Make Game of that which makes as much of Thee.

XLVI.

For in and out, above, about, below,
'Tis nothing but a Magic Shadow-show,
Play'd in a Box whose Candle is the Sun,
Round which we Phantom Figures come and go.

XLVII.

And if the Wine you drink, the Lip you press,
End in the Nothing all Things end in—Yes—
Then fancy while Thou art, Thou art but what
Thou shalt be—Nothing—Thou shalt not be less.

XLVIII.

While the Rose blows along the River Brink,
With old Khayyám the Ruby Vintage drink:
And when the Angel with his darker Draught
Draws up to Thee—take that, and do not shrink.

XLIX.

'Tis all a Chequer-board of Nights and Days
Where Destiny with Men for Pieces plays:
Hither and thither moves, and mates, and slays,
And one by one back in the Closet lays.

L.

The Ball no Question makes of Ayes and Noes,
But Right or Left, as strikes the Player goes;
And He that toss'd Thee down into the Field,
*He* knows about it all—HE knows—HE knows!

LI.

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it.

LII.

And that inverted Bowl we call The Sky,
Whereunder crawling coop't we live and die,
Lift not thy hands to *It* for help—for It
Rolls impotently on as Thou or I.

LIII.

With Earth's first Clay They did the Last Man's knead,
And then of the Last Harvest sow'd the Seed:
Yea, the first Morning of Creation wrote
What the Last Dawn of Reckoning shall read.

LIV.

I tell Thee this—When, starting from the Goal,
Over the shoulders of the flaming Foal
Of Heav'n Parwín and Mushtara they flung,
In my predestin'd Plot of Dust and Soul

LV.

The Vine had struck a Fibre; which about
If clings my Being—let the Súfi flout;
Of my Base Metal may be filed a Key,
That shall unlock the Door he howls without.

LVI.

And this I know: whether the one True Light,
Kindle to Love, or Wrathconsume me quite,
One Glimpse of It within the Tavern caught
Better than in the Temple lost outright.

LVII.

Oh Thou, who didst with Pitfall and with Gin
Beset the Road I was to wander in,
Thou wilt not with Predestination round
Enmesh me, and impute my Fall to Sin?

LVIII.

Oh, Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make,
And who with Eden didst devise the Snake;
For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man
Is blacken'd, Man's Forgiveness give—and take!

* * * * * * * *

## KÚZA-NÁMA.

LIX.

Listen again. One Evening at the Close
Of Ramazán, ere the better Moon arose,
In that old Potter's Shop I stood alone
With the clay Population round in Rows.

LX.

And, strange to tell, among that Earthen Lot
Some could articulate, while others not:
And suddenly one more impatient cried—
"Who *is* the Potter, pray, and who the Pot?"

LXI.

Then said another—"Surely not in vain
"My Substance from the common Earth was ta'en,
"That He who subtly wrought me into Shape
"Should stamp me back to common Earth again."

LXII.

Another said—"Why, ne'er a peevish Boy,
"Would break the Bowl from which he drank in Joy;
"Shall He that *made* the Vessel in pure Love
"And Fansy, in an after Rage destroy!"

LXIII.

None answer'd this; but after Silence spake
A Vessel of a more ungainly Make:
"They sneer at me for leaning all awry;
"What! did the Hand then of the Potter shake?"

LXIV.

Said one—"Folks of a surly Tapster tell,
"And daub his Visage with the Smoke of Hell;
"They talk of some strict Testing of us—Pish!
"He's a Good Fellow, and 'twill all be well."

LXV.

Then said another with a long-drawn Sigh,
"My Clay with long oblivion is gone dry:
"But, fill me with the old familiar Juice,
"Methinks I might recover by-and-bye!"

LXVI.

So while the Vessels one by one were speaking,
One spied the little Crescent all were seeking:
And then they jogg'd each other, "Brother! Brother!
"Hark to the Porter's Shoulder-knot a-creaking!"

* * * * * * * *

LXVII.

Ah, with the Grape my fading Life provide,
And wash my Body whence the Life has died,
And in a Windingsheet of Vine-leaf wrapt,
So bury me by some sweet Garden-side.

LXVIII.

That ev'n my buried Ashes such a Snare
Of Perfume shall fling up into the Air,
As not a True Believer passing by
But shall be overtaken unaware.

LXIX.

Indeed the Idols I have loved so long
Have done my Credit in Men's Eye much wrong:
  Have drown'd my Honour in a shallow Cup,
And sold my Reputation for a Song.

LXX.

Indeed, indeed, Repentance oft before
I swore—but was I sober when I swore?
  And then and then came Spring, and Rose-in-hand
My thread-bare Penitence apieces tore.

LXXI.

And much as Wine has play'd the Infidel,
And robb'd me of my Robe of Honour—well,
  I often wonder what the Vintners buy
One half so precious as the Goods they sell.

LXXII.

Alas, that Spring should vanish with the Rose!
That Youth's sweet-scented Manuscript should close!
  The Nightingale that in the Branches sang,
Ah, whence, and whither flown again, who knows!

LXXIII.

Ah Love! could thou and I with Fate conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
  Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire!

LXXIV.

Ah, Moon of my Delight who know'st no wane,
The Moon of Heav'n is rising once again:
  How oft hereafter rising shall she look
Through this same Garden after me—in vain!

LXXV.

And when Thyself with shining Foot shall pass
Among the Guests Star-scatter'd on the Grass,
And in thy joyous Errand reach the Spot
Where I made one—turn down an empty Glass!

TAMÁM SHUD.

## NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

It must be admitted that FitzGerald took great liberties with the original in his version of Omar Khayyám. The first stanza is entirely his own, and in stanza XXXI. of the fourth edition (XXXVI. in the second) he has introduced two lines from Attár (See Letters p. 251). In stanza LXXXI. (fourth edition), writes Professor Cowell, 'There is no original for the line about the snake: I have looked for it in vain in Nicolas; but I have always supposed that the last line is FitzGerald's mistaken version of Quatr. 236 in Nicolas' ed. which runs thus:

O thou who knowest the secrets of every one's mind,
Who graspest every one's hand in the hour of weakness,
O God, give me repentance and accept my excuses,
O thou who givest repentance and acceptest the excuses of every one.

FitzGerald mistook the meaning of *giving* and *accepting* as used here, and so invented his last line out of his own mistake. I wrote to him about it when I was in Calcutta; but he never cared to alter it'.

# VARIATIONS

## BETWEEN THE SECOND, THIRD AND FOURTH EDITIONS OF

# OMAR KHAYYÁM.

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STANZA

I. In ed. 2:

Wake! For the Sun behind yon Eastern height
Has chased the Session of the Stars from Night;
And, to the field of Heav'n ascending, strikes
The Sultán's Turret with a Shaft of Light.

In the first draught of ed. 3 the first and second lines stood thus:

Wake! For the Sun before him into Night
A Signal flung that put the Stars to flight.

II. In ed. 2:

Why lags the drowsy Worshipper outside?

V. In edd. 2 and 3:

But still a Ruby gushes from the Vine.

IX. In edd. 2 and 3:

Morning a thousand Roses brings, you say.

X. In ed. 2:

Let Rustum cry "To battle!" as he likes,
Or Hátim Tai "To Supper!"—heed not you.

In ed. 3:

Let Zál and Rustum thunder as they will.

STANZA

XII. In ed. 2:

Here with a little Bread beneath the Bough,
A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse—and Thou &c.

XIII. In ed. 2:

Ah, take the Cash, and let the Promise go,
Nor heed the music of a distant Drum!

XX. In ed. 2:

And this delightful Herb whose living Green.

XXII. In edd. 2 and 3:

That from his Vintage rolling Time has prest.

XXVI. In edd. 2 and 3:

Of the Two Worlds so learnedly, are thrust.

XXVII. In ed. 2:

Came out by the same door as in I went.

XXVIII. In edd. 2 and 3:

And with my own hand wrought to make it grow.

XXX. In ed. 2:

Ah, contrite Heav'n endowed us with the Vine
To drug the memory of that insolence!

XXXI. In ed. 2:

And many Knots unravel'd by the Road.

XXXII. In edd. 2 and 3:

There was the Veil through which I could not see.

XXXIII. In ed. 2:

Nor Heav'n, with those eternal Signs reveal'd.

XXXIV. In ed. 2:

Then of the THEE IN ME who works behind
The Veil of Universe I cried to find
A Lamp to guide me through the darkness; and
Something then said—"An Understanding blind."

XXXV. In ed. 2:

I lean'd, the secret Well of Life to learn.

STANZA

XXXVI. In ed. 2:

And drink; and that impassive Lip I kiss'd.

XXXVIII. In ed. 2 the only difference is 'For' instead of 'And' in the first line; but in the first draught of ed. 3 the stanza appeared thus:

For, in your Ear a moment—of the same
Poor Earth from which that Human Whisper came,
The luckless Mould in which Mankind was cast
They did compose, and call'd him by the name.

In ed. 3 the first line was altered to

Listen—a moment listen!—Of the same &c.

XXXIX. In ed. 2:

On the parcht herbage but may steal below.

XL. In ed. 2:

As then the Tulip for her wonted sup
Of Heavenly Vintage lifts her chalice up,
Do you, twin offspring of the soil, till Heav'n
To Earth invert you like an empty Cup.

In the first draught of ed. 3 the stanza is the same as in edd. 3 and 4, except that the second line is

Of Wine from Heav'n her little Tass lifts up.

XLI. In ed. 2 and the first draught of ed. 3:

Oh, plagued no more with Human or Divine
To-morrow's tangle to itself resign.

XLII. In ed. 2:

And if the Cup you drink, the Lip you press,
End in what All begins and ends in—Yes;
Imagine then you *are* what heretofore
You *were*—hereafter you shall not be less.

The first draught of ed. 3 agrees with edd. 3 and 4 except that the first line is

And if the Cup, and if the Lip you press.

STANZA

XLIII. In ed. 2:

So when at last the Angel of the drink
Of Darkness finds you by the river-brink,
And, proffering his Cup, invites your Soul
Forth to your Lips to quaff it—do not shrink.

In the first draught of ed. 3 the only change made was from 'proffering' to 'offering', but in ed. 3 the stanza assumed the form in which it also appeared in ed. 4. The change from 'the Angel' to 'that Angel' was made in MS. by FitzGerald in a copy of ed. 4.

XLIV. In ed. 2:

Is't not a shame—is't not a shame for him
So long in this Clay suburb to abide!

XLV. In ed. 2:

But that is but a Tent wherein may rest.

XLVI. In ed. 2:

And fear not lest Existence closing *your*
Account, should lose, or know the type no more.

XLVII. In ed. 2:

As much as Ocean of a pebble-cast.

In ed. 3:

As the SEV'N SEAS should heed a pebble-cast.

XLVIII. In ed. 2:

One Moment in Annihilation's Waste,
One Moment, of the Well of Life to taste—
The Stars are setting, and the Caravan
Draws to the 'Dawn of Nothing—Oh make haste'.

In the first draught of ed. 3 line 3 originally stood:

Before the starting Caravan has reach'd

the rest of the stanza being as in edd. 3 and 4.

XLIX. In ed. 2:

A Hair, they say, divides the False and True.

The change from 'does' to 'may' in the last line was made by FitzGerald in MS.

STANZA

L. In ed. 2:

A Hair, they say, divides the False and True.

LII. In edd. 2 and 3:

He does Himself contrive, enact, behold.

LIII. In the first draught of ed. 3:

To-morrow, when You shall be You no more.

LIV. In ed. 2:

Better be merry with the fruitful Grape.

LV. In ed. 2:

You know, my Friends, how bravely in my House
For a new Marriage I did make Carouse.

LVII. In ed. 2:

Have squared the Year to Human Compass, eh?
If so, by striking from the Calendar.

LXII. In ed. 2:

When the frail Cup is crumbled into Dust!

LXIII. In ed. 2:

The Flower that once is blown for ever dies.

LXV. In edd. 2 and 3:

They told their fellows, and to Sleep return'd.

LXVI. In ed. 2:

And after many days my Soul return'd
And said, 'Behold, Myself am Heav'n and Hell'.

LXVII. In ed. 2:

And Hell the Shadow of a Soul on fire.

LXVIII. In ed. 2:

Of visionary Shapes that come and go
Round with this Sun-illumin'd Lantern held.

LXIX. In ed. 2:

Impotent Pieces of the Game He plays.

LXX. In ed. 2:

But Right or Left as strikes the Player goes.

STANZA

LXXII. In ed. 2 and the first draught of ed. 3:

And that inverted Bowl we call The Sky.

In edd. 2 and 3:

As impotently rolls as you or I.

LXXIX. In ed. 2:

Pure Gold for what he lent us dross-allay'd.

LXXXI. In ed. 2:

For all the Sin the Face of wretched Man
Is black with—Man's Forgiveness give—and take!

LXXXIII. In ed. 2:

And once again there gather'd a scarce heard
Whisper among them; as it were, the stirr'd
Ashes of some all but extinguisht Tongue
Which mine ear kindled into living Word.

LXXXIV. In ed. 2:

My Substance from the common Earth was ta'en,
That He who subtly wrought me into Shape
Should stamp me back to shapeless Earth again?

LXXXV. In ed. 2:

Another said—'Why, ne'er a peevish Boy
'Would break the Cup from which he drank in Joy;
'Shall He that of his own free Fancy made
The Vessel, in an after-rage destroy!'

LXXXVI. In ed. 2:

None answer'd this; but after silence spake.

LXXXVII. In ed. 2:

Thus with the Dead as with the Living, *What?*
And *Why?* so ready, but the *Wherefor* not,
One on a sudden peevishly exclaim'd,
'Which is the Potter, pray, and which the Pot?

LXXXVIII. In ed. 2:

Said one—'Folks of a surly Master tell,
'And daub his Visage with the Smoke of Hell;
'They talk of some sharp Trial of us—Pish!
'He's a Good Fellow, and 'twill all be well.'

STANZA

LXXXIX. In ed. 2:

'Well,' said another, 'Whoso will, let try.

XC. In ed. 2:

One spied the little Crescent all were seeking.

XCI. In ed. 2:

And wash my Body whence the Life has died.

XCIII. In ed. 2:

Have done my credit in Men's eye much wrong.

XCV. In ed. 2:

One half so precious as the ware they sell.

XCVII. In ed. 2:

Toward which the fainting Traveller might spring.

XCVIII. In ed. 2:

Oh if the World were but to re-create,
That we might catch ere closed the Book of Fate,
And make The Writer on a fairer leaf
Inscribe our names, or quite obliterate!

XCIX. In ed. 2:

Ah Love! could you and I with Fate conspire.

C. In ed. 2:

But see! The rising Moon of Heav'n again
Looks for us, Sweet-heart, through the quivering Plane:
How oft hereafter rising will she look
Among those leaves—for one of us in vain!

CI. In ed. 3:

And when Yourself with silver Foot shall pass.

In the first draught of ed. 3 'Foot' is changed to 'step'.

In ed. 3:

And in your blissful errand reach the spot.

## STANZAS WHICH APPEAR IN THE SECOND EDITION ONLY.

XIV. Were it not Folly, Spider-like to spin
The Thread of present Life away to win—
What? for ourselves, who know not if we shall
Breathe out the very Breath we now breathe in!

XX. (This stanza is quoted in the note to stanza XVIII. in the third and fourth editions.)

XXVIII. Another Voice, when I am sleeping, cries,
"The Flower should open with the Morning skies."
And a retreating Whisper, as I wake—
"The Flower that once has blown for ever dies."

XLIV. Do you, within your little hour of Grace,
The waving Cypress in your Arms enlace,
Before the Mother back into her arms
Fold, and dissolve you in a last embrace.

LXV. If but the Vine and Love-abjuring Band
Are in the Prophet's Paradise to stand,
Alack, I doubt the Prophet's Paradise
Were empty as the hollow of one's Hand.

LXXVII. For let Philosopher and Doctor preach
Of what they will, and what they will not—each
Is but one Link in an eternal Chain
That none can slip, nor break, nor over-reach.

LXXXVI. Nay, but, for terror of his wrathful Face,
I swear I will not call Injustice Grace;
Not one Good Fellow of the Tavern but
Would kick so poor a Coward from the place.

XC. And once again there gather'd a scarce heard
Whisper among them; as it were, the stirr'd
Ashes of some all but extinguisht Tongue,
Which mine ear kindled into living Word.

(In the third and fourth editions stanza LXXXIII. takes the place of this.)

XCIX. Whither resorting from the vernal Heat
Shall Old Acquaintance Old Acquaintance greet,
Under the Branch that leans above the Wall
To shed his Blossom over head and feet.

CVII. Better, oh better, cancel from the Scroll
Of Universe one luckless Human Soul,
Than drop by drop enlarge the Flood that rolls
Hoarser with Anguish as the Ages roll.

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## COMPARATIVE TABLE OF STANZAS IN THE FOUR EDITIONS.

| Ed. 1 | Ed. 2 | Edd. 3 & 4 | Ed. 1 | Ed. 2 | Edd. 3 & 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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| | LI | L |
| | LII | LI |
| | LIII | LII |
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| | CVI | XCVIII |
| | CVII | |

# SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

AN ALLEGORY

TRANSLATED FROM THE PERSIAN

OF

JÁMÍ.

# LETTER TO PROFESSOR COWELL.

My dear Cowell,

Two years ago, when we began (I for the first time) to read this Poem together, I wanted you to translate it, as something that should interest a few who are worth interesting. You, however, did not see the way clear then, and had Aristotle pulling you by one Shoulder and Prakrit Vararuchi by the other, so as indeed to have hindered you up to this time completing a Version of Háfiz' best Odes which you had then happily begun. So, continuing to like old Jámí more and more, I must try my hand upon him; and here is my reduced Version of a small Original. What Scholarship it has is yours, my Master in Persian, and so much beside; who are no further answerable for *all* than by well liking and wishing publisht what you may scarce have Leisure to find due fault with.

Had all the Poem been like Parts, it would have been all translated, and in such Prose lines as you measure Hafiz in, and such as any one should adopt who does not feel himself so much of a Poet as him he translates and some he translates for—before whom it is best to lay the raw material as genuine as may be, to work up to their own better Fancies. But, unlike Hafiz' best—(whose Sonnets are sometimes as close packt as Shakespeare's, which they resemble in more ways than one)—Jámí, you know, like his Countrymen generally, is very diffuse in what he tells and his way of telling it. The very structure of the Persian Couplet—(here,

like people on the Stage, I am repeating to you what you know, with an Eye to the small Audience beyond)—so often ending with the same Word, or Two Words, if but the foregoing Syllable secure a lawful Rhyme, so often makes the Second Line but a slightly varied Repetition, or Modification of the First, and gets slowly over Ground often hardly worth gaining. This iteration is common indeed to the Hebrew Psalms and Proverbs—where, however, the Value of the Repetition is different. In your Hafiz also, not Two only, but Eight or Ten Lines perhaps are tied to the same Close of Two—or *Three*—words; a verbal Ingenuity as much valued in the East as better Thought. And how many of all the Odes called his, more and fewer in various Copies, do you yourself care to deal with?—And in the better ones how often some lines, as I think for this reason, unworthy of the Rest—interpolated perhaps from the Mouths of his many Devotees, Mystical and Sensual—or crept into Manuscripts of which he never arranged or corrected one from the First?

This, together with the confined Action of Persian Grammar, whose organic simplicity seems to me its difficulty when applied, makes the Line by Line Translation of a Poem not line by line precious tedious in proportion to its length. Especially—(what the Sonnet does not feel)—in the Narrative; which I found when once eased in its Collar, and yet missing somewhat of rhythmical Amble, somehow, and not without resistance on my part, swerved into that "easy road" of Verse—easiest as unbeset with any exigencies of Rhyme. Those little Stories, too, which you thought untractable, but which have their Use as well as Humour by way of quaint Interlude Music between the little Acts, felt ill at ease in solemn Lowth-Isaiah Prose, and had learn'd their tune, you know, before even Hiawatha came to teach

people to quarrel about it. Till, one part drawing on another, the Whole grew to the present form.

As for the much bodily omitted—it may be readily guessed that an Asiatic of the 15th Century might say much on such a subject that an Englishman of the 19th would not care to read. Not that our Jámí is ever *licentious* like his Contemporary Chaucer, nor like Chaucer's Posterity in Times that called themselves more Civil. But better Men will not now endure a simplicity of Speech that Worse men abuse. Then the many more, and foolisher, Stories—preliminary Te Deums to Allah and Allah's-shadow Sháh—very much about Alef Noses, Eyebrows like inverted Núns, drunken Narcissus Eyes—and that eternal Moon Face which never wanes from Persia—of all which there is surely enough in this Glimpse of the Original. No doubt some Oriental character escapes—the Story sometimes becomes too Skin and Bone without due interval of even Stupid and Bad. Of the two Evils?—At least what I have chosen is least in point of bulk; scarcely in proportion with the length of its Apology which, as usual, probably discharges one's own Conscience at too great a Price; people at once turning against you the Arms they might have wanted had you not laid them down. However it may be with this, I am sure a complete Translation—even in Prose—would not have been a readable one—which, after all, is a useful property of most Books, even of Poetry.

In studying the Original, you know, one gets contentedly carried over barren Ground in a new Land of Language—excited by chasing any new Game that will but show Sport; the most worthless to win asking perhaps all the sharper Energy to pursue, and so far yielding all the more Satisfaction when run down. Especially, cheered on as I was by such a Huntsman as poor Dog of a Persian Scholar never

hunted with before; and moreover—but that was rather in the Spanish Sierras—by the Presence of a Lady in the Field, silently brightening about us like Aurora's Self, or chiming in with musical Encouragement that all we started and ran down must be Royal Game!

Ah, happy Days! When shall we Three meet again—when dip in that unreturning Tide of Time and Circumstance!—In those Meadows far from the World, it seemed, as Salámán's Island—before an Iron Railway broke the Heart of that Happy Valley whose Gossip was the Mill-wheel, and Visitors the Summer Airs that momentarily ruffled the sleepy Stream that turned it as they chased one another over to lose themselves in Whispers in the Copse beyond. Or returning—I suppose you remember whose Lines they are—

> When Winter Skies were tinged with Crimson still
> Where Thornbush nestles on the quiet hill,
> And the live Amber round the setting Sun,
> Lighting the Labourer home whose Work is done,
> Burn'd like a Golden Angel-ground above
> The solitary Home of Peace and Love—

at such an hour drawing home together for a fireside Night of it with Æschylus or Calderon in the Cottage, whose walls, modest almost as those of the Poor who clustered—and with good reason—round, make to my Eyes the Towered Crown of Oxford hanging in the Horizon, and with all Honour won, but a dingy Vapour in Comparison. And now, should they beckon from the terrible Ganges, and this little Book begun as a happy Record of past, and pledge perhaps of future, Fellowship in Study, darken already with the shadow of everlasting Farewell!

But to turn from you Two to a Public—nearly as numerous—(with whom, by the way, this Letter may die without a

name that *you* know very well how to supply),—here is the best I could make of Jámí's Poem—"Ouvrage de peu d'étendue," says the Biographie Universelle, and, whatever that means, here collapsed into a nutshell Epic indeed; whose Story however, if nothing else, may interest some Scholars as one of Persian Mysticism—perhaps the grand Mystery of all Religions—an Allegory fairly devised and carried out—dramatically culminating as it goes on; and told as to this day the East loves to tell her Story, illustrated by Fables and Tales, so often (as we read in the latest Travels) at the expense of the poor Arab of the Desert.

The Proper Names—and some other Words peculiar to the East—are printed as near as may be to their native shape and sound—"Sulaymán" for Solomon—"Yúsuf" for Joseph, &c., as being not only more musical, but retaining their Oriental flavour unalloyed with European Association. The *accented* Vowels are to be pronounced long, as in Italian—Salámán—Absál—Shírín, &c.

The Original is in rhymed Couplets of this measure—

– ∪ – – | – ∪ – – | – ∪ – | |

which those who like Monkish Latin may remember in

Dum Salámán verba Regis cogitat,
Pectus intrá de profundis æstuat.

or in English—by way of asking, "your Clemency for us and for our Tragedy"—

Of Salámán and of Absál hear the Song;
Little wants Man here below, nor little long.

[1856]

# NOTICE OF JÁMÍ'S LIFE.

*Drawn from Rosenzweig's "Biographische Notizen" of the Poet.*

Núruddín Abdurrahman, Son of Mauláná Nizámuddín Ahmed, and descended on the Mother's side from One of the Four great "Fathers" of Islam, was born A.H. 817, A.D. 1414, in Jám, a little Town of Khorásán, whither his Grandfather had removed from Desht of Ispahán and from which the poet ultimately took his Takhallus, or Poetic name, Jámí. This word also signifies "A Cup;" wherefore, he says, "Born in Jám, and dipt in the "*Jám*" of Holy Lore, for a double reason I must be called Jámí in the Book of Song."* He was celebrated afterwards in other Oriental Titles—"Lord of Poets"—"Elephant of Wisdom," &c., but latterly liked to call himself "The Ancient of Herát," where he mainly resided, and eventually died.

When Five Years old he received the name of Núruddín, the "Light of Faith," and even so early began to show the Metal, and take the Stamp that distinguished him through Life. In 1419, a famous Sheikh, Khwájah Mohammed Pársá, then in the last Year of his Life, was being carried through Jám. "I was not then Five Years old,"

* He elsewhere plays upon his name, imploring God that he may be accepted as a Cup to pass about that Spiritual Wine of which the Persian Mystical Poets make so much.

says Jámí, "and my Father, who with his Friends went forth to salute him, had me carried on the Shoulders of one of the Family and set down before the Litter of the Sheikh, who gave a Nosegay into my hand. Sixty Years have passed, and methinks I now see before me the bright Image of the Holy Man, and feel the Blessing of his Aspect, from which I date my after Devotion to that Brotherhood in which I hope to be enrolled."

So again, when Mauláná Fakhruddín Loristání had alighted at his Mother's house—"I was then so little that he set me upon his Knee, and with his Fingers drawing the Letters of 'ALÍ' and 'OMAR' in the Air, laughed with delight to hear me spell them. He also by his Goodness sowed in my Heart the Seed of his Devotion, which has grown to Increase within me—in which I hope to live, and in which to die. Oh God! Dervish let me live, and Dervish die; and in the Company of the Dervish do Thou quicken me to life again!"

Jámí first went to a School at Herát; and afterward to one founded by the Great Timúr at Samarcand. There he not only outstript his Fellow-students in the very Encyclopædic Studies of Persian Education, but even puzzled his Doctors in Logic, Astronomy, and Theology; who, however, with unresenting Gravity welcomed him—"Lo! a new Light added to our Galaxy!"—And among them in the wider Field of Samarcand he might have liked to remain, had not a Dream recalled him to Herát. A Vision of the Great Súfi Master there, Mohammed Saaduddín Káshgharí, appeared to him in his Sleep, and bade him return to One who would satisfy all Desire. Jámí returned to Herát; he saw the Sheikh discoursing with his Disciples by the Door of the Great Mosque; day after day passed him by without daring to present himself; but the Master's Eye was upon him;

day by day drew him nearer and nearer—till at last the Sheikh announces to those about him—"Lo! this Day have I taken a Falcon in my Snare!"

Under him Jámí began his Súfí Noviciate, with such Devotion, both to Study and Master, that going, he tells us, but for one Summer Holiday into the Country, a single Line sufficed to "lure the Tassel-gentle back again;"

"Lo! here am I, and Thou look'st on the Rose!"

By-and-by he withdrew, by due course of Súfí Instruction, into Solitude so long and profound, that on his return to Men he had almost lost the Power of Converse with them. At last, when duly taught, and duly authorized to teach as Súfí Doctor, he yet would not take upon himself so to do, though solicited by those who had seen such a Vision of him as had drawn himself to Herát; and not till the Evening of his Life was he to be seen taking that place by the Mosque which his departed Master had been used to occupy before.

Meanwhile he had become Poet, which no doubt winged his Reputation and Doctrine far and wide through a People so susceptible of poetic impulse.

"A Thousand times," he says, "I have repented of such Employment; but I could no more shirk it than one can shirk what the Pen of Fate has written on his Forehead"—"As Poet I have resounded through the World; Heaven filled itself with my Song, and the Bride of Time adorned her Ears and Neck with the Pearls of my Verse, whose coming Caravan the Persian Háfiz and Saadí came forth gladly to salute, and the Indian Khosrau and Hasan hailed as a Wonder of the World." "The Kings of India and Rúm greet me by Letter: the Lords of Irák and Tabríz

load me with Gifts; and what shall I say of those of Khorásán, who drown me in an Ocean of Munificence?"

This, though Oriental, is scarcely bombast. Jámí was honoured by Princes at home and abroad, at the very time they were cutting one another's Throats; by his own Sultan Abú Saïd; by Hasan Beg of Mesopotamia—"Lord of Tabríz"—by whom Abú Saïd was defeated, dethroned, and slain; by Mohammed II. of Turkey—"King of Rúm"—who in his turn defeated Hasan; and lastly by Husein Mírzá Baikará, who somehow made away with the Prince whom Hasan had set up in Abú Saïd's Place at Herát. Such is the House that Jack builds in Persia.

As Hasan Beg, however—the USUNCASSAN of old European Annals—is singularly connected with the present Poem, and with probably the most important event in Jámí's Life, I will briefly follow the Steps that led to that as well as other Princely Intercourse.

In A.H. 877, A.D. 1472, Jámí set off on his Pilgrimage to Mecca, as every True Believer who could afford it was expected once in his Life to do. He, and, on his Account, the Caravan he went with, were honourably and safely escorted through the interjacent Countries by order of their several Potentates as far as Baghdád. There Jámí fell into trouble by the Treachery of a Follower whom he had reproved, and who misquoted his Verse into disparagement of ALÍ, the Darling Imám of Persia. This, getting wind at Baghdád, was there brought to solemn Tribunal. Jámí came victoriously off; his Accuser was pilloried with a dockt Beard in Baghdád Market-place: but the Poet was so ill pleased with the stupidity of those who had believed the Report, that, in an after Poem, he called for a Cup of Wine to seal up Lips of whose Utterance the Men of Baghdád were unworthy.

After four months' stay there, during which he visited at Helleh the Tomb of Alí's Son Husein, who had fallen at Kerbela, he set forth again—to Najaf, (where he says his Camel sprang forward at sight of Alí's own Tomb)—crossed the Desert in twenty-two days, continually meditating on the Prophet's Glory, to Medina; and so at last to MECCA, where, as he sang in a Ghazal, he went through all Mohammedan Ceremony with a Mystical Understanding of his Own.

He then turned Homeward: was entertained for forty-five days at Damascus, which he left the very Day before the Turkish Mohammed's Envoys come with 5000 Ducats to carry him to Constantinople. On arriving at Amida, the Capital of Mesopotamia, he found War broken out and in full Flame between that Sultan and Hasan Beg, King of the Country, who caused Jámí to be honourably escorted through the dangerous Roads to Tabríz; there received him in full Díván, and would fain have him abide at his Court awhile. Jámí, however, was intent on Home, and once more seeing his aged Mother—for *he* was turned of Sixty—and at last reached Herát in the Month of Shaabán, 1473, after the Average Year's absence.

This is the HASAN, "in Name and Nature *Handsome*" (and so described by some Venetian Ambassadors of the Time), who was Father of YAKÚB BEG, to whom Jámí dedicated the following Poem; and who, after the due murder of an Elder Brother, succeeded to the Throne; till all the Dynasties of "Black and White Sheep" together were swept away a few years after by Ismaíl, Founder of the Sofí Dynasty in Persia.

Arrived at home, Jámí found Husein Mírzá Baikará, last of the Timuridæ, seated on the Throne there, and ready to receive him with open Arms. Nizámuddín Alí Shír,

Husein's Vizír, a Poet too, had hailed in Verse the Poet's Advent from Damascus as "The Moon rising in the West;" and they both continued affectionately to honour him as long as he lived.

Jámí sickened of his mortal Illness on the 13th of Moharrem, 1492—a Sunday. His Pulse began to fail on the following Friday, about the Hour of Morning Prayer, and stopped at the very moment when the Muezzin began to call to Evening. He had lived Eighty-one Years. Sultan Husein undertook the pompous Burial of one whose Glory it was to have lived and died in Dervish Poverty; the Dignitaries of the Kingdom followed him to the Grave; where twenty days afterward was recited in presence of the Sultan and his Court an Eulogy composed by the Vizír, who also laid the first Stone of a Monument to his Friend's Memory—the first Stone of "Tarbet'i Jámí," in the Street of Meshhed, a principal Thoro'fare of the City of Herát. For, says Rosenzweig, it must be kept in mind that Jámí was reverenced not only as a Poet and Philosopher, but as a Saint also; who not only might work a Miracle himself, but leave such a Power lingering about his Tomb. It was known that an Arab, who had falsely accused him of selling a Camel he knew to be unsound, died very shortly after, as Jámí had predicted, and on the very selfsame spot where the Camel fell. And that libellous Rogue at Baghdad—he, putting his hand into his Horse's Nose-bag to see if the beast had finisht his Corn, had his Forefinger bitten off by the same—from which "Verstümmlung" he soon died—I suppose, as he ought, of Lock-jaw.

The Persians, who are adepts at much elegant Ingenuity, are fond of commemorating Events by some analogous Word or Sentence whose Letters, cabalistically corresponding to certain Numbers, compose the Date required. In

Jámí's case they have hit upon the word "KÁS," A Cup, whose signification brings his own name to Memory, and whose relative letters make up his 81 years. They have *Táríkhs* also for remembering the Year of his Death: Rosenzweig gives some; but Ouseley the prettiest of all;—

> Dúd az Khorásán bar ámed—
> "The smoke" of Sighs "went up from Khorásán."

No Biographer, says Rosenzweig cautiously, records of Jámí's having more than one Wife (Granddaughter of his Master Sheikh) and Four Sons; which, however, are Five too many for the Doctrine of this Poem. Of the Sons, Three died Infant; and the Fourth (born to him in very old Age), and for whom he wrote some Elementary Tracts, and the more famous "Beháristán," lived but a few years, and was remembered by his Father in the Preface to his Khiradnáma-i Iskander—Alexander's Wisdom-book—which perhaps had also been begun for the Boy's Instruction. He had likewise a nephew, one Mauláná Abdullah, who was ambitious of following his Uncle's Footsteps in Poetry. Jámí first dissuaded him; then, by way of trial whether he had a Talent as well as a Taste, bade him imitate Firdausí's Satire on Sháh Mahmúd. The Nephew did so well, that Jámí then encouraged him to proceed; himself wrote the first Couplet of his First (and most celebrated) Poem—Laila and Majnún—

> This Book of which the Pen has now laid the Foundation,
> May the diploma of Acceptance one day befall it,—

and Abdullah went on to write that and four other Poems which Persia continues to delight in to the present day, remembering their Author under his Takhallus of HÁTIFÍ—"The Voice from Heaven"—and Last of the classic Poets of Persia.

Of Jámí's literary Offspring, Rosenzweig numbers forty-four. But Shír Khán Lúdí in his "Memoirs of the Poets," says Ouseley, accounts him Author of *Ninety-nine* Volumes of Grammar, Poetry, and Theology, which, he says, "continue to be universally admired in all parts of the Eastern World, Írán, Túrán, and Hindústán"—copied some of them into precious Manuscripts, illuminated with Gold and Painting, by the greatest Penmen and Artists of the time; one such—the "Beháristán"—said to have cost some thousands of pounds—autographed as their own by two Sovereign Descendants of TIMÚR; and now reposited away from "the Drums and Tramplings" of Oriental Conquest in the tranquil seclusion of an English library.

With us, his Name is almost wholly associated with his "Yúsuf and Zulaikhá;" the "Beháristán" aforesaid: and this present "Salámán and Absál," which he tells us is like to be the last product of his Old Age. And these three Poems count for three of the brother Stars of that Constellation into which his seven best Mystical Poems are clustered under the name of "HEFT AURANG"—those "SEVEN THRONES" to which we of the West and North give our characteristic name of "Great Bear" and "Charles's Wain."

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This particular Salámán Star, which thus conspicuously figures in Eastern eyes, but is reduced to one of very inferior magnitude as seen through this English Version,—is one of many Allegories under which the Persian Mystic symbolized an esoteric doctrine which he dared not—and probably could not—more intelligibly reveal. As usual with such Poems in the story-loving East, the main Fable is intersected at every turn with some other subsidiary story,

more or less illustrative of the matter in hand: many of these of a comic and grotesque Character mimicking the more serious, as may the Gracioso of the Spanish Drama. As for the metre of the Poem, it is the same as that adopted by Attár, Jeláluddín and other such Poets—and styled, as I have heard, the "Metre Royal"—although not having been used by Firdausí for his Sháh-námeh. Thus it runs:

– ∪ – – | – ∪ – – | – ∪ – |

a pace which, to those not used to it, seems to bring one up with too sudden a halt at the end of every line to promise easy travelling through an Epic. It may be represented in Monkish Latin Quantity:

Dum Salámán verba Regis cogitat,
Pectus illi de profundis æstuat;

or by English accent in two lines that may also plead for us and our Allegory:

Of Salámán and of Absál hear the Song;
Little wants man here below, nor little long.

# SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL.

## PRELIMINARY INVOCATION.

Oh Thou, whose Spirit through this universe,
In which Thou dost involve thyself diffused,
Shall so perchance irradiate human clay
That men, suddenly dazzled, lose themselves
In ecstasy before a mortal shrine
Whose Light is but a Shade of the Divine;
Not till thy Secret Beauty through the cheek
Of Laila smite doth she inflame Majnún*;
And not till Thou have kindled Shírín's Eyes
The hearts of those two Rivals swell with blood.
For Loved and Lover are not but by Thee,
Nor Beauty;—mortal Beauty but the veil
Thy Heavenly hides behind, and from itself
Feeds, and our hearts yearn after as a Bride
That glances past us veil'd—but ever so
That none the veil from what it hides may know.
How long wilt thou continue thus the World
To cozen† with the fantom of a veil

* Well-known Types of Eastern Lovers. Shírín and her Suitors figure in Sect. XX.

† The Persian Mystics also represent the Deity dicing with Human Destiny behind the Curtain.

From which thou only peepest? I would be
Thy Lover, and thine only—I, mine eyes
Seal'd in the light of Thee to all but Thee,
Yea, in the revelation of Thyself
Lost to Myself, and all that Self is not
Within the Double world that is but One.
Thou lurkest under all the forms of Thought,
Under the form of all Created things;
Look where I may, still nothing I discern
But Thee throughout this Universe, wherein
Thyself Thou dost reflect, and through those eyes
Of him whom MAN thou madest, scrutinize.
To thy Harím DIVIDUALITY
No entrance finds—no word of THIS and THAT;
Do Thou my separate and derivéd Self
Make one with thy Essential! Leave me room
On that Diván which leaves no room for Twain;
Lest, like the simple Arab in the tale,
I grow perplext, oh God! 'twixt "ME" and "THEE;"
If *I*—this Spirit that inspires me whence?
If *THOU*—then what this sensual Impotence?

---

*From the solitary Desert*
*Up to Baghdád came a simple*
*Arab; there amid the rout*
*Grew bewilder'd of the countless*
*People, hither, thither, running,*
*Coming, going, meeting, parting,*
*Clamour, clatter, and confusion,*
*All about him and about.*
*Travel-wearied, hubbub-dizzy,*
*Would the simple Arab fain*

*Get to sleep—"But then, on waking,*
*"How," quoth he, "amid so many*
*"Waking know Myself again?"*
*So, to make the matter certain,*
*Strung a gourd about his ankle,*
*And, into a corner creeping,*
*Baghdád and Himself and People*
*Soon were blotted from his brain.*
*But one that heard him and divined*
*His purpose, slily crept behind;*
*From the Sleeper's ankle clipping,*
*Round his own the pumpkin tied,*
*And laid him down to sleep beside.*
*By and by the Arab waking*
*Looks directly for his Signal—*
*Sees it on another's Ankle—*
*Cries aloud, "Oh Good-for-nothing*
*"Rascal to perplex me so!*
*"That by you I am bewilder'd,*
*"Whether* I *be* I *or no!*
*"If* I*—the Pumpkin why on* You?
*"If* You*—then Where am I, and* Who?

---

And yet, how long, O Jámí, stringing Verse,
Pearl after pearl, on that old Harp of thine?
Year after year attuning some new Song,
The breath of some old Story*? Life is gone,
And that last song is not the last; my Soul
Is spent—and still a Story to be told!
And I, whose back is crooked as the Harp
I still keep tuning through the Night till Day!

* "Yúsuf and Zulaikhá," "Laila and Majnún," &c.

That harp untuned by Time—the harper's hand
Shaking with Age—how shall the harper's hand
Repair its cunning, and the sweet old harp
Be modulated as of old? Methinks
'Twere time to break and cast it in the fire;
The vain old harp, that, breathing from its strings
No music more to charm the ears of men,
May, from its scented ashes, as it burns,
Breathe resignation to the Harper's soul,
Now that his body looks to dissolution.
My teeth fall out—my two eyes see no more
Till by Feringhí glasses turn'd to four*;
Pain sits with me sitting behind my knees,
From which I hardly rise unhelpt of hand;
I bow down to my root, and like a Child
Yearn, as is likely, to my Mother Earth,
Upon whose bosom I shall cease to weep,
And on my Mother's bosom fall asleep†.

The House in ruin, and its music heard
No more within, nor at the door of speech,
Better in silence and oblivion
To fold me head and foot, remembering
What THE VOICE whisper'd in the Master's‡ ear—
"No longer think of Rhyme, but think of ME!"—
Of WHOM?—Of HIM whose Palace the SOUL is,
And Treasure-house—who notices and knows
Its income and out-going, and *then* comes

* First notice of Spectacles in Oriental Poetry, perhaps.

† The same Figure is found in Chaucer's "Pardoner's Tale," and, I think, in other western poems of that era.

‡ Mohammed Saaduddín Káshgharí, spoken of in Notice of Jámí's life, p. 405.

To fill it when the Stranger is departed.
Yea; but whose Shadow being Earthly Kings,
Their Attributes, their Wrath and Favour, His,—
Lo! in the meditation of His glory,
The SHÁH* whose subject upon Earth I am,
As he of Heaven's, comes on me unaware,
And suddenly arrests me for his due.
Therefore for one last travel, and as brief
As may become the feeble breath of Age,
My weary pen once more drinks of the well,
Whence, of the Mortal writing, I may read
Anticipation of the Invisible.

---

*One who travell'd in the Desert*
*Saw* MAJNÚN *where he was sitting*
*All alone like a Magician*
*Tracing Letters in the Sand.*
"*Oh distracted Lover! writing*
"*What the Sword-wind of the Desert*
"*Undeciphers so that no one*
"*After you shall understand.*"
MAJNÚN *answer'd*—"*I am writing*
"*Only for myself, and only*
"'LAILA,'—*if for ever* 'LAILA'
"*Writing, in that Word a Volume,*
"*Over which for ever poring,*
"*From her very Name I sip*
"*In Fancy, till I drink, her Lip.*"

---

* YAKÚB BEG: to whose protection Jámí owed a Song of gratitude.

## THE STORY.

### Part I.

A Sháh there was who ruled the realm of Yún*,
And wore the Ring of Empire of Sikander;
And in his reign A Sage, of such report
For Insight reaching quite beyond the Veil,
That Wise men from all quarters of the World,
To catch the jewel falling from his lips
Out of the secret treasure as he went,
Went in a girdle round him.—Which The Sháh
Observing, took him to his secresy;
Stirr'd not a step, nor set design afoot,
Without the Prophet's sanction; till, so counsell'd,
From Káf to Káf† reach'd his Dominion:
No People, and no Prince that over them
The ring of Empire wore, but under his
Bow'd down in Battle; rising then in Peace
Under his Justice grew, secure from wrong,
And in their strength was his Dominion strong.
The Sháh that has not Wisdom in himself,
Nor has a Wise one for his Counsellor,
The wand of his Authority falls short,
And his Dominion crumbles at the base.
For he, discerning not the characters
Of Tyranny and Justice, confounds both,

* Or "Yavan", Son of Japhet, from whom the country was called "Yúnan"—Ionia, meant by the Persians to express Greece generally. Sikander is of course, Alexander the Great.

† The Fabulous Mountain supposed by Asiatics to surround the World, binding the Horizon on all sides.

Making the World a desert, and Redress
A fantom-water of the Wilderness.

---

*God said to the Prophet David—*
*"David, whom I have exalted*
*"From the sheep to be my People's*
*"Shepherd, by your Justice my*
*"Revelation justify.*
*"Lest the misbelieving—yea,*
*"The Fire-adoring Princes rather*
*"Be my Prophets, who fulfil,*
*"Knowing not my* WORD, *my* WILL."

---

ONE night THE SHÁH of Yúnan as he sate
Contemplating his measureless extent
Of Empire, and the glory wherewithal,
As with a garment robed, he ruled alone;
Then found he nothing wanted to his heart
Unless a Son, who, while he lived, might share,
And, after him, his robe of Empire wear.
And then he turned him to THE SAGE, and said:
"O Darling of the soul of IFLATÚN*;
"To whom with all his school ARISTO bows;
"Yea, thou that an ELEVENTH to the TEN
"INTELLIGENCES addest: Thou hast read
"The yet unutter'd secret of my Heart;
"Answer—Of all that man desires of God
"Is any blessing greater than a Son?
"Man's prime Desire; by whom his name and he

* Iflatún, Plato: Aristo, Aristotle: both renowned in the East to this Day. For the Ten Intelligences, see Appendix.

"Shall live beyond himself; by whom his eyes
"Shine living, and his dust with roses blows.
"A Foot for thee to stand on, and an Arm
"To lean by; sharp in battle as a sword;
"Salt of the banquet-table; and a tower
"Of salutary counsel in Diván;
"One in whose youth a Father shall prolong
"His years, and in his strength continue strong."

When the shrewd SAGE had heard THE SHÁH'S discourse
In commendation of a Son, he said:
"Thus much of a *Good* Son, whose wholesome growth
"Approves the root he grew from. But for one
"Kneaded of *Evil*—well, could one revoke
"His generation, and as early pull
"Him and his vices from the string of Time.
"Like Noah's, puff'd with insolence and pride,
"Who, reckless of his Father's warning call,
"Was by the voice of ALLAH from the door
"Of refuge in his Father's Ark debarr'd,
"And perish'd in the Deluge*. And as none
"Who long for children may their children choose,
"Beware of teazing Allah for a Son,
"Whom having, you may have to pray to lose."

---

*Sick at heart for want of Children,*
*Ran before the Saint a Fellow,*
*Catching at his garment, crying,*
"*Master, hear and help me! Pray*
"*That* ALLAH *from the barren clay*

* See Note in Appendix I.

*"Raise me up a fresh young Cypress,*
*"Who my longing eyes may lighten,*
*"And not let me like a vapour*
*"Unremember'd pass away."*
*But the Dervish said—"Consider;*
*"Wisely let the matter rest*
*"In the hands of* ALLAH *wholly,*
*"Who, whatever we are after,*
*"Understands our business best."*
*Still the man persisted—"Master,*
*"I shall perish in my longing:*
*"Help, and set my prayer a-going!"*
*Then the Dervish raised his hand—*
*From the mystic Hunting-land*
*Of Darkness to the Father's arms*
*A musky Fawn of China drew—*
*A Boy—who, when the shoot of Passion*
*In his Nature planted grew,*
*Took to drinking, dicing, drabbing.*
*From a corner of the house-top*
*Ill-insulting honest women,*
*Dagger-drawing on the husband;*
*And for many a city-brawl*
*Still before the Cadi summon'd,*
*Still the Father pays for all.*
*Day and night the youngster's doings*
*Such—the city's talk and scandal;*
*Neither counsel, threat, entreaty,*
*Moved him—till the desperate Father*
*Once more to the Dervish running,*
*Catches at his garment—crying—*
*"Oh my only Hope and Helper!*
*"One more Prayer! That God, who laid,*

"*Would take this trouble from my head!*"
*But the Saint replied* "*Remember*
"*How that very Day I warn'd you*
"*Not with blind petition* ALLAH
"*Trouble to your own confusion;*
"*Unto whom remains no more*
"*To pray for, save that He may pardon*
"*What so rashly pray'd before.*"

---

"So much for the result; and for the means—
"Oh SHÁH, who would not be himself a slave,
"Which SHÁH least should, and of an appetite
"Among the basest of his slaves enslaved—
"Better let Azrael find him on his throne
"Of Empire sitting childless and alone,
"Than his untainted Majesty resign
"To that seditious drink, of which one draught
"Still for another and another craves,
"Till it become a noose to draw the Crown
"From off thy brows—about thy lips a ring,
"Of which the rope is in a Woman's hand,
"To lead thyself the road of Nothing down.
"For what is *She?* A foolish, faithless thing—
"A very Káfir in rapacity;
"Robe her in all the rainbow-tinted woof
"Of Susa, shot with rays of sunny Gold;
"Deck her with jewel thick as Night with star:
"Pamper her appetite with Houri fruit
"Of Paradise, and fill her jewell'd cup
"From the green-mantled Prophet's Well of Life—
"One little twist of temper—all your cost
"Goes all for nothing: and, as for yourself—

"Look! On your bosom she may lie for years;
"But, get you gone a moment out of sight,
"And she forgets you—worse, if, as you turn,
"Her eyes on any younger Lover light."

---

*Once upon the Throne together*
*Telling one another Secrets,*
*Sate* SULAYMÁN *and* BALKÍS*;
*The Hearts of both were turn'd to Truth,*
*Unsullied by Deception.*
*First the King of Faith* SULAYMÁN
*Spoke—"However just and wise*
"*Reported, none of all the many*
"*Suitors to my palace thronging*
"*But afar I scrutinize;*
"*And He who comes not empty-handed*
"*Grows to Honour in mine Eyes.*"
*After this,* BALKÍS *a Secret*
*From her hidden bosom utter'd,*
*Saying—"Never night or morning*
"*Comely Youth before me passes*
"*Whom I look not after, longing*"—

"If this, as wise Firdausí says, the curse
"Of better women, what then of the worse?"

---

THE SAGE his satire ended; and THE SHÁH,
Determined on his purpose, but the means

* Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, who, it appears, is no worse in one way than Solomon in another, unless in Oriental Eyes.

Resigning to Supreme Intelligence,
With Magic-mighty Wisdom his own WILL
Colleagued, and wrought his own accomplishment.
For Lo! from Darkness came to Light A CHILD,
Of carnal composition unattaint;
A Perfume from the realm of Wisdom wafted:
A Rosebud blowing on the Royal stem;
The crowning Jewel of the Crown; a Star
Under whose augury triumph'd the Throne.
For whom dividing, and again in one
Whole perfect Jewel re-uniting, those
Twin Jewel-words, SALÁMAT and ASMÁN*,
They hail'd him by the title of SALÁMÁN.
And whereas from no Mother milk he drew,
They chose for him a Nurse—her name ABSÁL—
So young, the opening roses of her breast
But just had budded to an infant's lip;
So beautiful, as from the silver line
Dividing the musk-harvest of her hair
Down to her foot that trampled crowns of Kings,
A Moon of beauty full; who thus elect
Should in the garment of her bounty fold
SALÁMÁN of auspicious augury,
Should feed him with the flowing of her breast.
And, once her eyes had open'd upon Him,
They closed to all the world beside, and fed
For ever doating on her Royal jewel
Close in his golden cradle casketed:
Opening and closing which her day's delight,
To gaze upon his heart-inflaming cheek,—
Upon the Babe whom, if she could, she would

* SALÁMAT, Security from Evil; ASMÁN, Heaven.

Have cradled as the Baby of her eye*.
In rose and musk she wash'd him—to his lip
Press'd the pure sugar from the honeycomb;
And when, day over, she withdrew her milk,
She made, and having laid him in, his bed,
Burn'd all night like a taper o'er his head.

And still as Morning came, and as he grew,
Finer than any bridal-puppet, which
To prove another's love a woman sends†,
She trick'd him up—with fresh Collyrium dew
Touch'd his narcissus eyes—the musky locks
Divided from his forehead—and embraced
With gold and ruby girdle his fine waist.

So for seven years she rear'd and tended him:
Nay, when his still-increasing moon of Youth
Into the further Sign of Manhood pass'd,
Pursued him yet, till full fourteen his years,
Fourteen-day full the beauty of his face,
That rode high in a hundred thousand hearts.
For, when SALÁMÁN was but half-lance high,
Lance-like he struck a wound in every one,
And shook down splendour round him like a Sun.

---

SOON as the Lord of Heav'n had sprung his horse
Over horizon into the blue field,
SALÁMÁN kindled with the wine of sleep,
Mounted a barb of fire for the Maidán;

* Literally, *Mardumak*—the *Mannikin*, or *Pupil*, of the Eye, corresponding to the Image so frequently used by our old Poets.

† See Appendix.

He and a troop of Princes—Kings in blood,
Kings in the kingdom-troubling tribe of beauty,
All young in years and courage*, bat in hand
Gallop'd a-field, toss'd down the golden ball
And chased, so many crescent Moons a full†;
And, all alike intent upon the Game,
SALÁMÁN still would carry from them all
The prize, and shouting "Hál!" drive home the ball.

This done, SALÁMÁN bent him as a bow
To Archery—from Masters of the craft
Call'd for an unstrung bow—himself the cord
Fitted unhelpt‡, and nimbly with his hand
Twanging made cry, and drew it to his ear:
Then, fixing the three-feather'd fowl, discharged:
And whether aiming at the fawn a-foot,
Or bird on wing, direct his arrow flew,
Like the true Soul that cannot but go true.

---

WHEN night came, that releases man from toil,
He play'd the chess of social intercourse;
Prepared his banquet-hall like Paradise,
Summon'd his Houri-faced musicians,
And, when his brain grew warm with wine, the veil
Flung off him of reserve: taking a harp,

* The same Persian Word signifying Youth and Courage.

† See Appendix.

‡ Bows being so gradually stiffened, according to the age and strength of the Archer, as at last to need five Hundred-weight of pressure to bend, says an old Translation of Chardin, who describes all the process up to bringing up the string to the ear, "*as if to hang it there*" before shooting. Then the first trial was, who could shoot highest: then, the mark, &c.

Between its dry string and his finger quick
Struck fire: or catching up a lute, as if
A child for chastisement, would pinch its ear
To wailing that should agéd eyes make weep.
Now like the Nightingale he sang alone;
Now with another lip to lip; and now
Together blending voice and instrument;
And thus with his associates night he spent.

His Soul rejoiced in knowledge of all kind;
The fine edge of his Wit would split a hair,
And in the noose of apprehension catch
A meaning ere articulate in word;
Close as the knitted jewel of Parwín
His jewel Verse he strung; his Rhetoric
Enlarging like the Mourners of the Bier*.
And when he took the nimble reed in hand
To run the errand of his Thought along
Its paper field—the character he traced,
Fine on the lip of Youth as the first hair,
Drove Penmen, as that Lovers, to despair.

His Bounty like a Sea was fathomless
That bubbled up with jewel, and flung pearl
Where'er it touch'd, but drew not back again;
It was a Heav'n that rain'd on all below
Dirhems for drops—

---

* The Pleiades and the Great Bear. This is otherwise prettily applied in the Anvári Soheili—"When one grows poor, his Friends, heretofore compact as THE PLEIADES, disperse wide asunder as THE MOURNERS."

But here that inward Voice
Arrested and rebuked me—"Foolish Jámí!
"Wearing that indefatigable pen
"In celebration of an alien SHÁH
"Whose Throne, not grounded in the Eternal World,
"If YESTERDAY it were, TO-DAY is not,
"TO-MORROW cannot be*." But I replied;
"Oh Fount of Light!—under an alien name
"I shadow One upon whose head the Crown
"WAS and yet IS, and SHALL BE; whose Firmán
"The Kingdoms Sev'n of this World, and the Seas,
"And the Sev'n Heavens, alike are subject to.
"Good luck to him who under other Name
"Instructed us that Glory to disguise
"To which the Initiate scarce dare lift his eyes."

---

*Sate a Lover in a garden*
*All alone, apostrophizing*
*Many a flower and shrub about him,*
*And the lights of Heav'n above.*
*Nightingaling thus, a Noodle*
*Heard him, and, completely puzzled,*
*"What," quoth he, "and you a Lover,*
*"Raving, not about your Mistress,*
*"But about the stars and roses—*
*"What have these to do with Love?"*
*Answer'd he; "Oh thou that aimest*
*"Wide of Love, and Lovers' language*
*"Wholly misinterpreting;*

* The Hero of the Story being of YÚNAN—IONIA, or Greece generally (the Persian Geography not being very precise)—and so not of THE FAITH.

"*Sun and Moon are but my Lady's*
"*Self, as any Lover knows;*
"*Hyacinth I said, and meant her*
"*Hair—her cheek was in the rose—*
"*And I myself the wretched weed*
"*That in her cypress shadow grows.*"

---

And now the cypress stature of Salámán
Had reached his top, and now to blossom full
The garden of his Beauty: and Absál,
Fairest of hers, as of his fellows he
The fairest, long'd to gather from the tree.
But, for that flower upon the lofty stem
Of Glory grew to which her hand fell short,
She now with woman's sorcery began
To conjure as she might within her reach.
The darkness of her eyes she darken'd round
With surma, to benight him in mid day,
And over them adorn'd and arch'd the bows*
To wound him there when lost: her musky locks
Into so many snaky ringlets curl'd,
In which Temptation nestled o'er the cheek
Whose rose she kindled with vermilion dew,
And then one subtle grain of musk laid there†,
The bird of that belovéd heart to snare.
Sometimes in passing with a laugh would break
The pearl-enclosing ruby of her lips;
Or, busied in the room, as by mischance
Would let the lifted sleeve disclose awhile

* With dark Indigo-Paint, as the Archery Bow with a thin Papyrus-like Bark.

† A *Patch*, sc.—"*Noir comme le Musc.*" De Sacy.

The vein of silver running up within:
Or, rising as in haste, her golden anklets
Clash, at whose sudden summons to bring down
Under her silver feet the golden Crown.
Thus, by innumerable witcheries,
She went about soliciting his eyes,
Through which she knew the robber unaware
Steals in, and takes the bosom by surprise.

---

*Burning with her love* ZULAIKHÁ
*Built a chamber, wall and ceiling*
*Blank as an untarnisht mirror,*
*Spotless as the heart of* YÚSUF.
*Then she made a cunning painter*
*Multiply her image round it:*
*Not an inch of wall or ceiling*
*But re-echoing her beauty.*
*Then amid them all in all her*
*Glory sat she down, and sent for*
YÚSUF—*she began a tale*
*Of Love—and lifted up her veil.*
*Bashfully beneath her burning*
*Eyes he turn'd away; but turning*
*Wheresoever, still about him*
*Saw* ZULAIKHÁ, *still* ZULAIKHÁ,
*Still, without a veil,* ZULAIKHÁ.
*But a voice as if from Canaan*
*Call'd him; and a Hand from Darkness*
*Touch'd; and ere a living Lip*
*Through the mirage of bewilder'd*
*Eyes seduced him, he recoil'd,*
*And let the skirt of danger slip.*

---

## Part II.

Alas for those who having tasted once
Of that forbidden vintage of the lips
That, press'd and pressing, from each other draw
The draught that so intoxicates them both,
That, while upon the wings of Day and Night
Time rustles on, and Moons do wax and wane,
As from the very Well of Life they drink,
And, drinking, fancy they shall never drain.
But rolling Heaven from his ambush whispers,
"So in my license is it not set down:
"Ah for the sweet societies I make
"At Morning, and before the Nightfall break,
"Ah for the bliss that coming Night fills up,
"And Morn looks in to find an empty Cup!"

---

*Once in Baghdád a poor Arab,*
*After weary days of fasting,*
*Into the Khalífah's banquet-*
*Chamber, where, aloft in State*
Harún *the Great at supper sate,*
*Push'd and pushing, with the throng,*
*Got before a perfume-breathing*
*Pasty, like the lip of* Shírín
*Luscious, or the Poet's song.*
*Soon as seen, the famisht clown*
*Seizes up and swallows down.*
*Then his mouth undaunted wiping—*
"*Oh Khalífah, hear me swear,*
"*While I breathe the dust of Baghdád,*

*"Ne'er at any other Table*
*"Than at Thine to sup or dine."*
*Grimly laugh'd* HARÚN, *and answer'd;*
*"Fool! who think'st to arbitrate*
*"What is in the hands of Fate—*
*"Take, and thrust him from the Gate!"*

---

WHILE a full Year was counted by the Moon,
SALÁMÁN and ABSÁL rejoiced together,
And neither SHÁH nor SAGE his face beheld.
They question'd those about him, and from them
Heard something: then himself to presence summon'd,
And all the truth was told. Then SAGE and SHÁH
Struck out with hand and foot in his redress.
And first with REASON, which is also best;
REASON that rights the wanderer; that completes
The imperfect; REASON that resolves the knot
Of either world, and sees beyond the Veil.
For REASON is the fountain from of old
From which the Prophets drew, and none beside:
Who boasts of other inspiration, lies—
There are no other Prophets than THE WISE.

---

AND first THE SHÁH:—"SALÁMÁN, Oh my Soul,
"Light of the eyes of my Prosperity,
"And making bloom the court of Hope with rose;
"Year after year, SALÁMÁN, like a bud
"That cannot blow, my own blood I devour'd,
"Till, by the seasonable breath of God,
"At last I blossom'd into thee, my Son;
"Oh, do not wound me with a dagger thorn;

"Let not the full-blown rose of Royalty
"Be left to wither in a hand unclean.
"For what thy proper pastime? Bat in hand
"To mount and manage RAKHSH* along the Field;
"Not, with no weapon but a wanton curl
"Idly reposing on a silver breast.
"Go, fly thine arrow at the antelope
"And lion—let me not My lion see
"Slain by the arrow eyes of a ghazál.
"Go, challenge ZÁL or RUSTAM to the Field,
"And smite the warriors' neck; not, flying them,
"Beneath a woman's foot submit thine own.
"O wipe the woman's henna from thy hand,
"Withdraw thee from the minion† who from thee
"Dominion draws, and draws me with thee down;
"Years have I held my head aloft, and all
"For Thee—Oh shame if thou prepare my Fall!"

---

*When before* SHIRÚYEH'S *dagger*
KAI KHUSRAU‡, *his Father, fell,*
*He declared this Parable—*
"*Wretch!—There was a branch that waxing*
"*Wanton o'er the root he drank from,*
"*At a draught the living water*

* "Lightning." The name of RUSTAM'S famous Horse in the SHÁH-NÁMEH.

† "SHÁH," and "SHÁHID" (A Mistress).

‡ KHUSRAU PARVÍZ (Chosroe The Victorious), Son of NOSHÍRVÁN The Great; slain, after Thirty Years of prosperous Reign, by his Son SHÍRÚYEH, who, according to some, was in love with his Father's mistress SHÍRÍN. See further on one of the most dramatic Tragedies in Persian history.

*"Drain'd wherewith himself to crown;*
*"Died the root—and with him died*
*"The branch—and barren was brought down!"*

---

THE SHÁH ceased counsel, and THE SAGE began.
"O last new vintage of the Vine of Life
"Planted in Paradise; Oh Master-stroke,
"And all-concluding flourish of the Pen
"KUN FA YAKÚN*; Thyself prime Archetype,
"And ultimate Accomplishment of MAN!
"The Almighty hand, that out of common earth
"Thy mortal outward to the perfect form
"Of Beauty moulded, in the fleeting dust
"Inscribed HIMSELF, and in thy bosom set
"A mirror to reflect HIMSELF in Thee.
"Let not that dust by rebel passion blown
"Obliterate that character: nor let
"That Mirror, sullied by the breath impure,
"Or form of carnal beauty fore-possest,
"Be made incapable of the Divine.
"Supreme is thine Original degree,
"Thy Star upon the top of Heaven; but Lust
"Will bring it down, down even to the Dust!"

---

*Quoth a Muezzín to the crested*
*Cock—"Oh Prophet of the Morning,*
*"Never Prophet like to you*
*"Prophesied of Dawn, nor Muezzín*

* "BE! AND IT IS"—The famous Word of Creation stolen from Genesis by the Kurán.

"*With so shrill a voice of warning*
"*Woke the sleeper to confession*
"*Crying*, 'LÁ ALLAH ILLÁ 'LLAH,
"MUHAMMAD RASÚLUHU*.'
"*One, methinks, so rarely gifted*
"*Should have prophesied and sung*
"*In Heav'n, the Birds of Heav'n among,*
"*Not with these poor hens about him,*
"*Raking in a heap of dung.*"
"*And*," *replied the Cock*, "*in Heaven*
"*Once I was; but by my foolish*
"*Lust to this uncleanly living*
"*With my sorry mates about me*
"*Thus am fallen. Otherwise,*
"*I were prophesying Dawn*
"*Before the gates of Paradise*†."

---

OF all the Lover's sorrows, next to that
Of Love by Love forbidden, is the voice
Of Friendship turning harsh in Love's reproof,
And overmuch of Counsel—whereby Love
Grows stubborn, and recoiling unsupprest
Within, devours the heart within the breast.

SALÁMÁN heard; his Soul came to his lips;
Reproaches struck not ABSÁL out of him,
But drove Confusion in; bitter became

* There is no God but God; Muhammad is his Prophet."

† Jámí, as, may be, other Saintly Doctors, kept soberly to one Wife. But wherefore, under the Law of Muhammad, should the Cock be selected (as I suppose he is) for a "*Caution*," because of his indulgence in Polygamy, however unusual among Birds?

The drinking of the sweet draught of Delight
And waned the splendour of his Moon of Beauty.
His breath was Indignation, and his heart
Bled from the arrow, and his anguish grew.
How bear it?—By the hand of Hatred dealt,
Easy to meet—and deal with, blow for blow;
But from Love's hand which one must not requite,
And cannot yield to—what resource but Flight?
Resolved on which, he victuall'd and equipp'd
A Camel, and one night he led it forth,
And mounted—he with ABSÁL at his side,
Like sweet twin almonds in a single shell.
And Love least murmurs at the narrow space
That draws him close and closer in embrace.

---

*When the Moon of Canaan* YÚSUF
*In the prison of Egypt darken'd,*
*Nightly from her spacious Palace-*
*Chamber, and its rich array,*
*Stole* ZULAIKHÁ *like a fantom*
*To the dark and narrow dungeon*
*Where her buried Treasure lay.*
*Then to those about her wond'ring—*
"*Were my Palace,*" *she replied,*
"*Wider than Horizon-wide,*
"*It were narrower than an Ant's eye,*
"*Were my Treasure not inside:*
"*And an Ant's eye, if but there*
"*My Lover, Heaven's horizon were.*"

---

SIX days SALÁMÁN on the Camel rode,
And then the hissing arrows of reproof

Were fallen far behind; and on the Seventh
He halted on the Seashore; on the shore
Of a great Sea that reaching like a floor
Of rolling Firmament below the Sky's
From KÁF to KÁF, to GAU and MÁHÍ* down
Descended, and its Stars were living eyes.
The Face of it was as it were a range
Of moving Mountains; or a countless host
Of Camels trooping tumultuously up,
Host over host, and foaming at the lip.
Within, innumerable glittering things
Sharp as cut Jewels, to the sharpest eye
Scarce visible, hither and hither slipping,
As silver scissors slice a blue brocade;
But should the Dragon coil'd in the abyss†
Emerge to light, his starry counter-sign
Would shrink into the depth of Heav'n aghast.

SALÁMÁN eyed the moving wilderness
On which he thought, once launcht, no foot, nor eye
Should ever follow; forthwith he devised
Of sundry scented woods along the shore
A little shallop like a Quarter-moon,

* Bull and Fish—the lowest Substantial Base of Earth. "He first made the Mountains; then cleared the Face of the Earth from Sea; then fixed it fast on Gau; Gau on Máhí; and Máhí on Air; and Air on what? on NOTHING; Nothing on Nothing, all is Nothing—Enough." Attár; quoted in De Sacy's Pendnamah, XXXV.

† The Sidereal Dragon, whose Head, according to the Pauránic (or poetic) astronomers of the East, devoured the Sun and Moon in Eclipse. "But *we* know," said Rámachandra to Sir W. Jones, "that the supposed Head and Tail of the Dragon mean only the *Nodes*, or points formed by intersections of the Ecliptic and the Moon's Orbit."—Sir W. Jones' Works, Vol. IV., p. 74.

Wherein Absál and He like Sun and Moon
Enter'd as into some Celestial Sign;
That, figured like a bow, but arrow-like
In flight, was feather'd with a little sail,
And, pitcht upon the water like a duck,
So with her bosom sped to her Desire.

When they had sail'd their vessel for a Moon,
And marr'd their beauty with the wind o' the Sea,
Suddenly in mid sea reveal'd itself
An Isle, beyond imagination fair;
An Isle that all was Garden; not a Flower,
Nor Bird of plumage like the flower, but there;
Some like the Flower, and others like the Leaf;
Some, as the Pheasant and the Dove adorn'd
With crown and collar, over whom, alone,
The jewell'd Peacock like a Sultan shone;
While the Musicians, and among them Chief
The Nightingale, sang hidden in the trees
Which, arm in arm, from fingers quivering
With any breath of air, fruit of all kind
Down scatter'd in profusion to their feet,
Where fountains of sweet water ran between,
And Sun and shadow chequer-chased the green.
Here Iram-garden seem'd in secresy
Blowing the rosebud of its Revelation*;
Or Paradise, forgetful of the dawn
Of Audit, lifted from her face the veil.

SALÁMÁN saw the Isle, and thought no more
Of Further—there with ABSÁL he sate down,
ABSÁL and He together side by side

* Note in Appendix.

Together like the Lily and the Rose,
Together like the Soul and Body, one.
Under its trees in one another's arms
They slept—they drank its fountains hand in hand—
Paraded with the Peacock—raced the Partridge—
Chased the green Parrot for his stolen fruit,
Or sang divisions with the Nightingale.
There was the Rose without a thorn, and there
The Treasure and no Serpent* to beware—
Oh think of such a Mistress at your side
In such a Solitude, and none to chide!

---

*Said to* WÁMIK *one who never*
*Knew the Lover's passion—"Why*
*"Solitary thus and silent*
*"Solitary places haunting,*
*"Like a Dreamer, like a Spectre,*
*"Like a thing about to die?"*
WÁMIK *answer'd—"Meditating*
*"Flight with Azrá† to the Desert:*
*"There by so remote a Fountain*
*"That, whichever way one travell'd,*
*"League on league, one yet should never*
*"See the face of Man; for ever*
*"There to gaze on my Belovéd;*
*"Gaze, till Gazing out of Gazing*
*"Grew to Being Her I gaze on,*
"SHE *and* I *no more, but in One*
*"Undivided Being blended.*
*"All that is by Nature twain*

* The supposed guardian of buried treasure.
† Wámik and Azrá (Virgin) two typical Lovers.

"*Fears, or suffers by, the pain*
"*Of Separation: Love is only*
"*Perfect when itself transcends*
"*Itself, and, one with that it loves,*
"*In undivided Being blends.*"

---

When by and by the Sháh was made aware
Of that heart-breaking Flight, his royal robe
He changed for ashes, and his Throne for dust,
And wept awhile in darkness and alone.
Then rose; and, taking counsel from the Sage,
Pursuit set everywhere afoot: but none
Could trace the footstep of the flying Deer.
Then from his secret Art the Sage-Vizyr
A Magic Mirror made; a Mirror like
The bosom of All-wise Intelligence
Reflecting in its mystic compass all
Within the sev'n-fold volume of the World
Involved; and, looking in that Mirror's face,
The Sháh beheld the face of his Desire.
Beheld those Lovers, like that earliest pair
Of Lovers, in this other Paradise
So far from human eyes in the mid sea,
And yet within the magic glass so near
As with a finger one might touch them, isled.
The Sháh beheld them; and compassion touch'd
His eyes and anger died upon his lips;
And arm'd with Righteous Judgment as he was,
Yet, seeing those two Lovers with one lip
Drinking that cup of Happiness and Tears*

* Κρατῆρα μακρὸν ἡδονῆς καὶ δακρύων
Κιρνῶντες ἐξέπινον ἄχρις ἐς μέθην.
*From Theodorus Prodromus, as quoted by Sir. W. Jones.*

In which Farewell had never yet been flung*,
He paused for their Repentance to recall
The lifted arm that was to shatter all.

---

The Lords of Wrath have perish'd by the blow
Themselves had aim'd at others long ago.
Draw not in haste the sword, which Fate, may be,
Will sheathe, hereafter to be drawn on Thee.

---

FARHÁD, *who the shapeless mountain*
*Into human likeness moulded,*
*Under* SHÍRÍN'S *eyes as slavish*
*Potters' earth himself became.*

*Then the secret fire of jealous*
*Frenzy, catching and devouring*
KAI KHUSRAU, *broke into flame.*

*With that ancient Hag of Darkness*
*Plotting, at the midnight Banquet*
FARHÁD'S *golden cup he poison'd,*
*And in* SHÍRÍN'S *eyes alone*
*Reign'd—But Fate that Fate revenges,*
*Arms* SHÍRÚYEH *with the dagger*
*That at once from* SHÍRÍN *tore,*
*And hurl'd him lifeless from his throne*†.

---

* A pebble flung into a Cup being a signal for a company to break up.

† One story is that Khusrau had promised that if Farhád cut through a Mountain, and brought a Stream through, Shírín should be his. Farhád was on the point of achieving his work, when Khusrau sent an old

But as the days went on, and still The Sháh
Beheld his Son how in the Woman lost,
And still the Crown that should adorn his head,
And still the Throne that waited for his foot,
Both trampled under by a base desire,
Of which the Soul was still unsatisfied—
Then from the sorrow of The Sháh fell Fire;
To Gracelessness ungracious he became,
And, quite to shatter that rebellious lust,
Upon Salámán all his Will, with all*
His Sage-Vizyr's Might-magic arm'd, discharged.
And Lo! Salámán to his Mistress turn'd,
But could not reach her—look'd and look'd again,
And palpitated tow'rd her—but in vain!
Oh Misery! As to the Bankrupt's eyes
The Gold he may not finger! or the Well
To him who sees a-thirst, and cannot reach,
Or Heav'n above reveal'd to those in Hell!
Yet when Salámán's anguish was extreme,
The door of Mercy open'd, and he saw
That Arm he knew to be his Father's reacht
To lift him from the pit in which he lay:
Timidly tow'rd his Father's eyes his own
He lifted, pardon-pleading, crime-confest,
And drew once more to that forsaken Throne,
As the stray bird one day will find her nest.

---

Woman (here, perhaps, purposely confounded with Fate) to tell him Shírín was dead; whereon Farhád threw himself headlong from the Rock. The Sculpture at Beysitún (or Besitún), where Rawlinson has deciphered Darius and Xerxes, was traditionally called Farhád's.

* He Mesmerizes him!—See also further on this Power of the Will.

*One was asking of a Teacher,*
*"How a Father his reputed*
*"Son for his should recognize?"*
*Said the Master, "By the stripling,*
*"As he grows to manhood, growing*
*"Like to his reputed Father,*
*"Good or Evil, Fool or Wise.*

*"Lo the disregarded Darnel*
*"With itself adorns the Wheat-field,*
*"And for all the vernal season*
*"Satisfies the farmer's eye;*
*"But the hour of harvest coming,*
*"And the thrasher by and by,*
*"Then a barren ear shall answer,*
*"'Darnel, and no Wheat, am I.'"*

---

YET Ah for that poor Lover! "Next the curse
"Of Love by Love forbidden, nothing worse
"Than Friendship turn'd in Love's reproof unkind,
"And Love from Love divorcing"—Thus I said:
Alas, a worse, and worse, is yet behind—
Love's back-blow of Revenge for having fled!

SALÁMÁN bow'd his forehead to the dust
Before his Father; to his Father's hand
Fast—but yet fast, and faster, to his own
Clung one, who by no tempest of reproof
Or wrath might be dissever'd from the stem
She grew to: till, between Remorse and Love,
He came to loathe his Life and long for Death.
And, as from him *She* would not be divorced,
With Her he fled again: he fled—but now

To no such Island centred in the sea
As lull'd them into Paradise before;
But to the Solitude of Desolation,
The Wilderness of Death. And as before
Of sundry scented woods along the shore
A shallop he devised to carry them
Over the waters whither foot nor eye
Should ever follow them, he thought—so now
Of sere wood strewn about the plain of Death,
A raft to bear them through the wave of Fire
Into Annihilation, he devised,
Gather'd, and built; and, firing with a Torch,
Into the central flame ABSÁL and He
Sprung hand in hand exulting. But the SAGE
In secret all had order'd; and the Flame,
Directed by his self-fulfilling WILL,
Devouring Her to ashes, left untouch'd
SALÁMÁN—all the baser metal burn'd,
And to itself the authentic Gold return'd.

---

## PART III.

FROM the Beginning such has been the Fate
Of Man, whose very clay was soak'd in tears.
For when at first of common Earth they took,
And moulded to the stature of the Soul,
For Forty days, full Forty days, the cloud
Of Heav'n wept over him from head to foot:
And when the Forty days had passed to Night,
The Sunshine of one solitary day

Look'd out of Heav'n to dry the weeping clay *.
And though that sunshine in the long arrear
Of darkness on the breathless image rose,
Yet, with the Living, every wise man knows
Such consummation scarcely shall be here!

SALÁMÁN fired the pile; and in the flame
That, passing him, consumed ABSÁL like straw,
Died his Divided Self, his Individual
Survived, and, like a living Soul from which
The Body falls, strange, naked, and alone.
Then rose his cry to Heaven—his eyelashes
Wept blood—his sighs stood like a smoke in Heaven,
And Morning rent her garment at his anguish.
And when Night came, that drew the pen across
The written woes of Day for all but him,
Crouch'd in a lonely corner of the house,
He seem'd to feel about him in the dark
For one who was not, and whom no fond word
Could summon from the Void in which she lay.

And so the Wise One found him where he sate
Bow'd down alone in darkness; and once more
Made the long-silent voice of Reason sound
In the deserted Palace of his Soul;
Until SALÁMÁN lifted up his head
To bow beneath the Master; sweet it seem'd,
Sweeping the chaff and litter from his own,
To be the very dust of Wisdom's door,
Slave of the Firmán of the Lord of Life,
Who pour'd the wine of Wisdom in his cup,

* Some such Legend is quoted by De Sacy and D'Herbelot from some Commentaries on the Kurán.

Who laid the dew of Peace upon his lips;
Yea, wrought by Miracle in his behalf.
For when old Love return'd to Memory,
And broke in passion from his lips, THE SAGE,
Under whose waxing WILL Existence rose
From Nothing, and, relaxing, waned again,
Raising a Fantom Image of ABSÁL,
Set it awhile before SALÁMÁN'S eyes,
Till, having sow'd the seed of comfort there,
It went again down to Annihilation.
But ever, as the Fantom past away,
THE SAGE would tell of a Celestial Love;
"ZUHRAH*," he said, "ZUHRAH, compared with whom
"That brightest star that bears her name in Heav'n
"Was but a winking taper; and Absál,
"Queen-star of Beauties in this world below,
"But her distorted image in the stream
"Of fleeting Matter; and all Eloquence,
"And Soul-enchaining harmonies of Song,
"A far-off echo of that Harp in Heav'n
"Which Dervish-dances to her harmony."

SALÁMÁN listen'd, and inclined—again
Entreated, inclination ever grew;
Until THE SAGE beholding in his Soul
The SPIRIT† quicken, so effectually
With ZUHRAH wrought, that she reveal'd herself
In her pure lustre to SALÁMÁN'S Soul,
And blotting ABSÁL'S Image from his breast,
There reign'd instead. Celestial Beauty seen,

* "ZUHRAH." The Planetary and Celestial Venus.

† "Maani." The Mystical pass-word of the Súfis, to express the transcendental New Birth of the Soul.

He left the Earthly; and, once come to know
Eternal Love, the Mortal he let go.

---

THE Crown of Empire how supreme a lot!
The Sultan's Throne how lofty! Yea, but not
For All—None but the Heaven-ward foot may dare
To mount—The head that touches Heaven to wear!—

When the Beloved of Royal augury
Was rescued from the bondage of ABSÁL,
Then he arose, and shaking off the dust
Of that lost travel, girded up his heart,
And look'd with undefiléd robe to Heaven.
Then was his Head worthy to wear the Crown,
His Foot to mount the Throne. And then THE SHÁH
From all the quarters of his World-wide realm
Summon'd all those who under Him the ring
Of Empire wore, King, Counsellor, Amír;
Of whom not one but to SALÁMÁN did
Obeisance, and lifted up his neck
To yoke it under His supremacy.
Then THE SHÁH crown'd him with the Golden Crown,
And set the Golden Throne beneath his feet,
And over all the heads of the Assembly,
And in the ears of all, his Jewel-word
With the Diamond of Wisdom cut, and said:—

---

"MY Son*, the Kingdom of The World is not
"Eternal, nor the sum of right desire;

* One sees Jámí taking advantage of his Allegorical Sháh to read a lesson to the Living,—whose ears Advice, unlike Praise, scarce ever reached, unless obliquely and by Fable. The Warning (and doubtless with good reason) is principally aimed at the Minister.

"Make thou the Law reveal'd of God thy Law,
"The voice of Intellect Divine within
"Interpreter; and considering To-day
"To-morrow's Seed-field, ere That come to bear,
"Sow with the harvest of Eternity.
"And, as all Work, and, most of all, the Work
"That Kings are born to, wisely should be wrought.
"Where doubtful of thine own sufficiency,
"Ever, as I have done, consult the Wise.
"Turn not thy face away from the Old ways,
"That were the canon of the Kings of Old;
"Nor cloud with Tyranny the glass of Justice:
"By Mercy rather to right Order turn
"Confusion, and Disloyalty to Love.
"In thy provision for the Realm's estate,
"And for the Honour that becomes a King,
"Drain not thy People's purse—the Tyranny
"Which Thee enriches at thy Subject's cost,
"Awhile shall make thee strong; but in the end
"Shall bow thy neck beneath thy People's hate,
"And lead thee with the Robber down to Hell.
"Thou art a Shepherd, and thy Flock the People,
"To help and save, not ravage and destroy;
"For which is for the other, Flock or Shepherd?
"And join with thee True men to keep the Flock—
"Dogs, if you will—but trusty—head in leash,
"Whose teeth are for the Wolf, not for the Lamb,
"And least of all the Wolf's accomplices.
"For Sháhs must have Vizyrs—but be they Wise
"And Trusty—knowing well the Realm's estate—
"Knowing how far to Sháh and Subject bound
"On either hand—not by extortion, nor
"By usury wrung from the People's purse,

"Feeding their Master, and themselves (with whom
"Enough is apt enough to make rebel)
"To such a surfeit feeding as feeds Hell.
"Proper in soul and body be they—pitiful
"To Poverty—hospitable to the Saint—
"Their sweet Access a salve to wounded Hearts;
"Their Wrath a sword against Iniquity,
"But at thy bidding only to be drawn;
"Whose Ministers they are, to bring thee in
"Report of Good or Evil through the Realm:
"Which to confirm with thine immediate Eye,
"And least of all, remember—least of all,
"Suffering Accuser also to be Judge,
"By surest steps up-builds Prosperity."

---

### Meaning of The Story.

Under the leaf of many a Fable lies
The Truth for those who look for it; of this
If thou wouldst look behind and find the Fruit,
(To which the Wiser hand hath found his way)
Have thy desire—No Tale of Me and Thee,
Though I and Thou be its Interpreters.*
What signifies The Shah? and what The Sage?
And what Salámán not of Woman born?
Who was Absál who drew him to Desire?
And what the Kingdom that awaited him
When he had drawn his Garment from her hand?
What means That Sea? And what that Fiery Pile?

* The Story is of *Generals*, though enacted by *Particulars*.

And what that Heavenly ZUHRAH who at last
Clear'd ABSÁL from the Mirror of his Soul?
Listen to me, and you shall understand
The Word that Lover wrote along the sand.*

---

THE Incomparable Creator, when this World
He did create, created first of all
The FIRST INTELLIGENCE†—First of a Chain
Of Ten Intelligences, of which the Last
Sole Agent is in this our Universe,
ACTIVE INTELLIGENCE so call'd; The One
Distributor of Evil and of Good,
Of Joy and Sorrow. Himself apart from MATTER,
In Essence and in Energy—He yet

* See p. 417.

† "These Ten Intelligences are only another Form of the Gnostic Daemones. The Gnostics held that Matter and Spirit could have no Intercourse—they were, as it were, *incommensurate*. How then, granting this premise, was Creation possible? Their answer was a kind of gradual Elimination. God, the 'Actus Purus,' created an Aeon; this Aeon created a Second; and so on, until the Tenth Aeon was sufficiently Material (as the Ten were in a continually descending Series) to affect Matter, and so cause the Creation by giving to Matter the Spiritual *Form*.

Similarly we have in Sufiism these Ten Intelligences in a corresponding Series, and for the same End.

There are Ten Intelligences, and Nine Heavenly Spheres, of which the Ninth is the Uppermost Heaven, appropriated to the First Intelligence; the Eighth, that of the Zodiac, to the Second; the Seventh, Saturn, to the Third; the Sixth, Jupiter, to the Fourth; the Fifth, Mars, to the Fifth; the Fourth, the Sun, to the Sixth; the Third, Venus, to the Seventh; the Second, Mercury, to the Eighth; the First, the Moon, to the Ninth; and THE EARTH is the peculiar Sphere of the Tenth, or lowest Intelligence, called THE ACTIVE."—E. B. C.—*v.* Appendix.

Hath fashion'd all that is—Material Form,
And Spiritual, all from HIM—by HIM
Directed all, and in his Bounty drown'd.
Therefore is He that Firmán-issuing SHAH
To whom the World was subject. But because
What He distributes to the Universe
Another and a Higher Power supplies,
Therefore all those who comprehend aright,
That Higher in THE SAGE will recognise.

*HIS* the PRIME SPIRIT that, spontaneously
Projected by the TENTH INTELLIGENCE,
Was from no womb of MATTER reproduced
A special Essence called THE SOUL OF MAN;
A Child of Heaven, in raiment unbeshamed
Of Sensual taint, and so SALÁMÁN named.

And who ABSÁL?—The Sense-adoring Body,
Slave to the Blood and Sense—through whom THE SOUL,
Although the Body's very Life it be,
Doth yet imbibe the knowledge and delight
Of things of SENSE; and these in such a bond
United as GOD only can divide,
As Lovers in this Tale are signified.

And what the Flood on which they sail'd, with those
Fantastic creatures peopled; and that Isle
In which their Paradise awhile they made,
And thought, for ever?—That false Paradise
Amid the fluctuating Waters found
Of Sensual passion, in whose bosom lies
A world of Being from the light of God
Deep as in unsubsiding Deluge drown'd.

And why was it that ABSÁL in that Isle
So soon deceived in her Delight, and He

Fell short of his Desire?—that was to show
How soon the Senses of their Passion tire,
And in a surfeit of themselves expire.

And what the turning of SALÁMÁN'S Heart
Back to THE SHAH, and to the throne of Might
And Glory yearning?—What but the return
Of the lost SOUL to his true Parentage,
And back from Carnal error looking up
Repentant to his Intellectual Right.

And when the Man between his living Shame
Distracted, and the Love that would not die,
Fled once again—what meant that second Flight
Into the Desert, and that Pile of Fire
On which he fain his Passion with Himself
Would immolate?—That was the Discipline
To which the living Man himself devotes,
Till all the Sensual dross be scorcht away,
And, to its pure integrity return'd,
His Soul alone survives. But forasmuch
As from a darling Passion so divorced
The wound will open and will bleed anew,
Therefore THE SAGE would ever and anon
Raise up and set before Salámán's eyes
That Fantom of the past; but evermore
Revealing one Diviner, till his Soul
She fill'd, and blotted out the Mortal Love.
For what is ZUHRAH?—What but that Divine
Original, of which the Soul of Man
Darkly possesst, by that fierce Discipline
At last he disengages from the Dust,
And flinging off the baser rags of Sense,
And all in Intellectual Light arrayed,

As Conqueror and King he mounts the Throne,
And wears the Crown of Human Glory—Whence,
Throne over Throne surmounting, he shall reign
One with the LAST and FIRST INTELLIGENCE.

---

This is the meaning of this Mystery,
Which to know wholly ponder in thy Heart,
Till all its ancient Secret be enlarged.
Enough—The written Summary I close,
And set my Seal—

## APPENDIX.

### "*To thy Harím Dividuality*
### "*No entrance finds,*" &c. (p. 414.)

This Sufí Identification with Deity (further illustrated in the Story of Salámán's first flight) is shadowed in a Parable of Jeláluddín, of which here is an outline. "One knocked at the Beloved's Door; and a Voice asked from within, 'Who is there?' and he answered, 'It is I.' Then the Voice said, 'This House will not hold Me and Thee.' And the Door was not opened. Then went the Lover into the Desert, and fasted and prayed in Solitude. And after a Year he returned, and knocked again at the Door. And again the Voice asked, 'Who is there?' and he said, 'It is Thyself!'—and the Door was opened to him."

---

### *O Darling of the soul of Iflatún*
### *To whom with all his school Aristo bows.* (p. 419.)

Some Traveller in the East—Professor Eastwick, I think—tells us that in endeavouring to explain to an Eastern Cook the nature of an *Irish Stew*, the man said he knew well enough about "*Aristo*." "*Iflatún*," might almost as well have been taken for "*Vol-au-vent*."

---

### "*Like Noah's, puff'd with Insolence and Pride*," &c. (p. 420.)

In the Kurán God engages to save Noah and his Family,—meaning all who believed in the Warning. One of Noah's Sons (Canaan or Ham, some think) would not believe. "And the Ark swam with them

between waves like Mountains: and Noah called up to his Son, who was separated from him, saying, 'Embark with us, my Son, and stay not with the Unbelievers.' He answered, 'I will get on a Mountain, which will secure me from the Water.' Noah replied, 'There is no security this Day from the Decree of God, except for him on whom he shall have Mercy.' And a Wave passed between them, and he became one of those who were drowned. And it was said, 'O Earth, swallow up thy waters; and Thou, O Heaven, withhold thy Rain!' And immediately the Water abated, and the Decree was fulfilled, and the Ark rested on the Mountain Al Judi; and it was said, 'Away with the ungodly People!' And Noah called upon his Lord, and said, 'O Lord, verily my Son is of my Family; and thy Promise is True: for Thou art the most just of those who exercise Judgment.' God answered, 'O Noah, verily he is not of thy Family: this intercession of thine for him, is not a righteous work.'"—*Sale's Kurán*, vol. ii. p. 21.

---

## "*Finer than any Bridal-puppet, which*
## "*To prove another's Love a Woman sends*," *&c.* (p. 425.)

In Atkinson's version of the "Kitábi Kulsúm Naneh" [c. XII.] we find among other Ceremonials and Proprieties of which the Book treats, that when a Woman wished to ascertain another's Love, she sent a Doll on a Tray with flowers and sweetmeats, and judged how far her affection was reciprocated by the Doll's being returned to her drest in a Robe of Honour, or in Black. The same Book also tells of *two* Dolls—Bride and Bridegroom, I suppose—being used on such occasions; the test of Affection being whether the one sent were returned with or without its Fellow.

---

## "*The Royal Game of Chúgán.*" (p. 426.)

For centuries the Royal Game of Persia, and adopted (Ouseley thinks) under varying modifications of name and practice by other nations, was played by Horsemen, who, suitably habited, and armed with semicircular-headed Bats or Sticks, strove to drive a Ball through a Goal of upright Pillars. (See Frontispiece.) We may call it "Horse-hockey," as heretofore played by young Englishmen in the Maidán of

Calcutta, and other Indian cities, I believe, and now in England itself under the name of Polo.

The Frontispiece to this version of the Poem is accurately copied from an Engraving in Sir William's Book, which he says (and those who care to look into the Bodleian[1] for it may see) "is accurately copied from a very beautiful Persian MS., containing the Works of Háfiz, transcribed in the year 956 of the Hijrah, 1549 of Christ; the MS. is in my own Collection. This Delineation exhibits two Horsemen contending for the Ball; their short Jackets seem peculiarly adapted to this Sport; we see the MÍL, or Goals; Servants attend on Foot, holding CHÚGÁNS in readiness for other Persons who may join in the Amusement, or to supply the place of any that may be broken. A young Prince (as his PARR, or Feather, would indicate) receives on his Entrance into the MEIDÀN, or Place of Exercise, a CHÚGÁN from the hands of a bearded Man, very plainly dressed; yet, as an intelligent Painter at Isfahán assured me (and as appears from other Miniatures in the same Book), this Bearded Figure is designed to represent Háfiz himself," &c.

The Persian legend at the Top Corner is the Verse from Háfiz which the Drawing illustrates:

Shahsuvára khúsh bemeidán ámedy gúy bezann.

---

## THE MUEZZÍN'S CRY. (p. 435.)

I am informed by a distinguished Arabic Scholar that the proper Cry of the Muezzin is, with some slight local variations, such as he heard it at Cairo and Damascus:

Allah Akbar, Allah Akbar;
Allah Akbar, Allah Akbar;
Ishhad lá allah illá 'llah;
Ishhad lá allah illá 'llah;
Ishhad lá allah illá 'llah;
Ishhad Muhammad rasúluhu;
Ishhad Muhammad rasúluhu;
Ishhad Muhammad rasúluhu;
Hayá 'alá 's-salát, Hayá 'alá 's-salát,
Inna 's-salát khair min an-naum.

[1] MS. Ouseley 20.

"God is great" (*four times*); "Confess that there is no God but God," (*three times*); "Confess that Muhammad is the prophet of God," (*three times*); "Come to Prayer, Come to Prayer, for Prayer is better than Sleep."

[A more accurate account will be found in Lane's Modern Egyptians.]

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## The Garden of Iram. (p. 438.)

"*Here Iram-garden seem'd in secresy*
"*Blowing the rosebud of its Revelation;*"

"Mahomet," says Sir W. Jones, "in the Chapter of The Morning, towards the end of his Alcoran, mentions a Garden called 'Irem,' which is no less celebrated by the Asiatic Poets than that of the Hesperides by the Greeks. It was planted, as the Commentators say, by a king named Shedád,"—deep in the Sands of Arabia Felix—"and was once seen by an Arabian who wandered far into the Desert in search of a lost Camel."

---

## The Ten Intelligences. (p. 450.)

A curious parallel to this doctrine is quoted by Mr Morley (Critical Miscellanies, Series II. p. 318), from so anti-gnostic a Doctor as Paley, in Ch. III. of his Natural Theology.

"As we have said, therefore, God prescribes limits to his power, that he may let in the exercise, and thereby exhibit demonstrations, of his wisdom. For then—*i.e.*, such laws and limitations being laid down, it is as though some Being should have fixed certain rules; and, if we may so speak, provided certain materials; and, afterwards, have committed to some other Being, out of these materials, and in subordination to these rules, the task of drawing forth a Creation; a supposition which evidently leaves room, and induces indeed a necessity, for contrivance. Nay, there may be many such Agents, and many ranks of these. We do not advance this as a doctrine either of philosophy or religion; but we say that the subject may be safely represented under this view; because the Deity, acting himself by general laws, will have the same consequence upon our reasoning, as if he had prescribed these laws to another."

## Bredfield Hall.

Lo, an English mansion founded
In the elder James's reign,
Quaint and stately, and surrounded
With a pastoral domain.

With well-timber'd lawn and gardens
And with many a pleasant mead,
Skirted by the lofty coverts
Where the hare and pheasant feed.

Flank'd it is with goodly stables,
Shelter'd by coeval trees:
So it lifts its honest gables
Toward the distant German seas;

Where it once discern'd the smoke
Of old sea-battles far away:
Saw victorious Nelson's topmasts
Anchoring in Hollesley Bay.

But whatever storm might riot,
Cannon roar, and trumpet ring,
Still amid these meadows quiet
Did the yearly violet spring:

Still Heaven's starry hand suspended
That light balance of the dew,
That each night on earth descended,
And each morning rose anew:

And the ancient house stood rearing
Undisturb'd her chimneys high,
And her gilded vanes still veering
Toward each quarter of the sky:

While like wave to wave succeeding
Through the world of joy and strife,
Household after household speeding
Handed on the torch of life:

First, sir Knight in ruff and doublet,
Arm in arm with stately dame;
Then the Cavaliers indignant
For their monarch brought to shame:

Languid beauties limn'd by Lely;
Full-wigg'd Justice of Queen Anne:
Tory squires who tippled freely;
And the modern Gentleman:

Here they lived, and here they greeted,
Maids and matrons, sons and sires,
Wandering in its walks, or seated
Round its hospitable fires:

Oft their silken dresses floated
Gleaming through the pleasure ground:
Oft dash'd by the scarlet-coated
Hunter, horse, and dappled hound.

Till the Bell that not in vain
Had summon'd them to weekly prayer,
Call'd them one by one again
To the church—and left them there!

They with all their loves and passions,
Compliment, and song, and jest,
Politics, and sports, and fashions,
Merged in everlasting rest!

So they pass—while thou, old Mansion,
Markest with unalter'd face
How like the foliage of thy summers
Race of man succeeds to race.

To most thou stand'st a record sad,
But all the sunshine of the year
Could not make thine aspect glad
To one whose youth is buried here.

In thine ancient rooms and gardens
Buried—and his own no more
Than the youth of those old owners,
Dead two centuries before.

Unto him the fields around thee
Darken with the days gone by:
O'er the solemn woods that bound thee
Ancient sunsets seem to die.

Sighs the selfsame breeze of morning
Through the cypress as of old;
Ever at the Spring's returning
One same crocus breaks the mould.

Still though 'scaping Time's more savage
Handywork this pile appears,
It has not escaped the ravage
Of the undermining years.

And though each succeeding master,
Grumbling at the cost to pay,
Did with coat of paint and plaster
Hide the wrinkles of decay;

Yet the secret worm ne'er ceases,
Nor the mouse behind the wall;
Heart of oak will come to pieces,
And farewell to Bredfield Hall!

These verses on his old home were written originally by FitzGerald as early as 1839, and communicated to Bernard Barton. They were circulated in slightly differing forms among his friends, and probably never received the final touches of his hand, but they contain what, Professor Cowell informs me, were in his own judgment the best lines he had ever written, as shewing real imagination, and it seems better to print them though imperfect. In reply to an old friend, who had heard some of the lines quoted and supposed them to be from Tennyson, he wrote: 'I was astonisht to find I had three sheets to fold up; and now one half "cheer" more, only to prevent you wasting any more trouble in looking through Tennyson for those verses—I myself having been puzzled at first to what you alluded by that single line. No: *I* wrote them along with many others about my old home more than forty years ago, and they recur to me also as I wander about the Garden or the Lawn. Therefore I suppose there is some native force about them, though your referring them to A. T. proves that I was echoing him.'

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## Chronomoros.

In all the actions that a Man performs, some part of his life passeth. We die with doing that, for which only our sliding life was granted. Nay, though we do nothing, Time keeps his constant pace, and flies as fast in idlenesse, as in employment. Whether we play or labour, or sleep, or dance, or study, THE SUNNE POSTETH, AND THE SAND RUNNES.—Owen Felltham.

Wearied with hearing folks cry,
That Time would incessantly fly,
Said I to myself, "I don't see
Why Time should not wait upon me;

I will not be carried away,
Whether I like it, or nay:"—
But ere I go on with my strain,
Pray turn me that hour-glass again!

I said, "I will read, and will write,
And labour all day, and all night,
And Time will so heavily load,
That he cannot but wait on the road;"—
But I found, that, balloon-like in size,
The more fill'd, the faster he flies;
And I could not the trial maintain,
Without turning the hour-glass again!

Then said I, "If Time has so flown
When laden, I'll leave him alone;
And I think that he cannot but stay,
When he's nothing to carry away!"
So I sat, folding my hands,
Watching the mystical sands,
As they fell, grain after grain,
Till I turn'd up the hour-glass again!

Then I cried, in a rage, "Time *shall* stand!"
The hour-glass I smash'd with my hand,
My watch into atoms I broke
And the sun-dial hid with a cloak!
"Now," I shouted aloud, "Time is done"!
When suddenly, down went the Sun;
And I found to my cost and my pain,
I might buy a new hour-glass again!

Whether we wake, or we sleep,
Whether we carol, or weep,
The Sun, with his Planets in chime,
Marketh the going of Time;

But Time, in a still better trim,
Marketh the going of him:
One link in an infinite chain,
Is this turning the hour-glass again!

The robes of the Day and the Night,
Are not wove of mere darkness and light;
We read that, at Joshua's will,
The Sun for a Time once stood still!
So that Time by his measure to try,
Is Petitio Principii!
Time's Scythe is going amain,
Though he turn not his hour-glass again!

And yet, after all, what is Time?
Renowned in Reason, and Rhyme,
A Phantom, a Name, a Notion,
That measures Duration or Motion?
Or but an apt term in the lease
Of Beings, who know they must cease?
The hand utters more than the brain,
When turning the hour-glass again!

The King in a carriage may ride,
And the Beggar may crawl at his side;
But, in the general race,
They are travelling all the same pace,
And houses, and trees, and high-way,
Are in the same gallop as they:
We mark our steps in the train,
When turning the hour-glass again!

People complain, with a sigh,
How terribly Chroniclers lie;
But there is one pretty right,
Heard in the dead of the night,

Calling aloud to the people,
Out of St Dunstan's Steeple,
  Telling them under the vane,
  To turn their hour-glasses again!

MORAL.

Masters! we live here for ever,
Like so many fish in a river;
We may mope, tumble, or glide,
And eat one another beside;
But, whithersoever we go,
The River will flow, flow, flow!
  And now, that I've ended my strain,
  Pray turn me that hour-glass again!

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## Virgil's Garden.

*Laid out à la Delille.*

"There is more pleasantness in the little platform of a Garden which he gives us about the middle of this Book" ('Georgick' IV. 115—148) "than in all the spacious Walks and Waterfalls of Monsieur Rapin."—Dryden; two of whose lines are here marked by inverted commas.

But that, my destined voyage almost done,
I think to slacken sail and shoreward run,
I would enlarge on that peculiar care
Which makes the Garden bloom, the Orchard bear,
Pampers the Melon into girth, and blows
Twice to one summer the Calabrian Rose:

Nor many a shrub with flower and berries hung,
Nor Myrtle of the seashore* leave unsung.

"For where the Tower of old Tarentum stands,
And dark Galesus soaks the yellow sands,"
I mind me of an old Corycian swain,
Who from a plot of disregarded plain,
That neither Corn, nor Vine, nor Olive grew,
Yet such a store of garden-produce drew
That made him rich in heart as Kings with all
Their wealth, when he returned at even-fall,
And from the conquest of the barren ground
His table with unpurchased plenty crown'd.
For him the Rose first open'd; his, somehow,
The first ripe Apple redden'd on the bough;
Nay, even when melancholy Winter still
Congeal'd the glebe, and check'd the wandering rill,
The sturdy veteran might abroad be seen,
With some first slip of unexpected green,
Upbraiding Nature with her tardy Spring,
And those south winds so late upon the wing.
He sow'd the seed; and, under Sun and Shower,
Up came the Leaf, and after it the Flower,
From which no busier bees than his derived
More, or more honey for their Master hived:
Under his skilful hand no savage root
But sure to thrive with its adopted shoot;
No sapling but, transplanted, sure to grow,
Sizable standards set in even row;
Some for their annual crop of fruit, and some
For longer service in the years to come;

* Mitford says that it abounds on the coast of Calabria.

While his young Plane already welcome made
The guest who came to drink beneath the shade.

But, by the stern conditions of my song
Compell'd to leave where I would linger long,
To other bards the Garden I resign
Who with more leisure step shall follow mine.

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## From Petrarch.

(*Se la mia vita dall' aspro tormento.*)

If it be destined that my Life, from thine
Divided, yet with thine shall linger on
Till, in the later twilight of Decline,
I may behold those Eyes, their lustre gone;
When the gold tresses that enrich thy brow
Shall all be faded into silver-gray,
From which the wreaths that well bedeck them now
For many a Summer shall have fall'n away:
Then should I dare to whisper in your ears
The pent-up Passion of so long ago,
That Love which hath survived the wreck of years
Hath little else to pray for, or bestow,
Thou wilt not to the broken heart deny
The boon of one too-late relenting Sigh.

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## Preface to Polonius.

[1852.]

Few books are duller than books of Aphorisms and Apophthegms. A Jest-book is, proverbially, no joke; a Wit-book, perhaps, worse; but dullest of all, probably, is the Moral-book, which this little volume pretends to be. So with men: the Jester, the Wit, and the Moralist, each wearisome in proportion as each deals exclusively in his one commodity. "Too much of one thing," says Fuller, "is good for nothing."

Bacon's "Apophthegms" seem to me the best collection of many men's sayings; the greatest variety of wisdom, good sense, wit, humour, and even simple "naiveté," (as one must call it for want of a native word,) all told in a style whose dignity and antiquity (together with perhaps our secret consciousness of the gravity and even tragic greatness of the narrator) add a particular humour to the lighter stories.

Johnson said Selden's Table-talk was worth all the French "Ana" together. Here also we find wit, humour, fancy, and good sense alternating, something as one has heard in some scholarly English gentleman's after-dinner talk—the best English common-sense in the best common English. It outlives, I believe, all Selden's books; and is probably much better, collected even imperfectly by another, than if he had put it together himself.

What would become of Johnson if Boswell had not done as much for his talk? If the Doctor himself, or some of his more serious admirers, had recorded it!

And (leaving alone Epictetus, à Kempis, and other Moral aphorists) most of the collections of this nature I have seen, are made up mainly from Johnson and the Essayists of the

last century, his predecessors and imitators; when English thought and language had lost so much of their vigour, freshness, freedom, and picturesqueness—so much, in short, of their native character, under the French polish that came in with the second Charles. When one lights upon, "He who"—"The man who"—"Of all the virtues that adorn the breast"—&c.,—one is tempted to swear, with Sir Peter Teazle, against all "*sentiment*," and shut the book. How glad should we be to have Addison's Table-talk as we have Johnson's! and how much better are Spence's Anecdotes of Pope's Conversation than Pope's own letters!

If a scanty reader could, for the use of yet scantier readers than himself, put together a few sentences of the wise, and also of the less wise,—(and Tom Tyers said a good thing or two in his day,*)—from Plato, Bacon, Rochefoucauld, Goethe, Carlyle, and others,—a little Truth, new or old, each after his kind—nay, of Truism too, (into which all truth must ultimately be dogs-eared,) and which, perhaps, "the wit of one, and the wisdom of many," has preserved in the shape of some nameless and dateless Proverbs which yet "retain life and vigour," and widen into new relations with the widening world—

Not a book of *Beauties*—other than as all who have the best to tell, have also naturally the best way of telling it; nor of the "limbs and outward flourishes" of Truth, however eloquent; but in general, and as far as I understand,

* "Tom Tyers," said Johnson, "describes me best, 'a ghost who never speaks till spoken to.' Another sentence in Tom's 'Resolutions' still remains in my memory, 'Mem.—to think more of the living and less of the dead; for the dead have a world of their own.'" Tom was the original of Tom Restless in the Rambler, a literary gossip about London in those days, author of Anecdotes of Pope, Addison, Johnson, &c. Johnson used to say of him, "I never see Tom but he tells me something I did not know before."

of clear, decided, wholesome, and available insight into our nature and duties. "Brevity is the soul of *Wit*," in a far wider sense than as we now use the word. "As the centre of the greatest circle," says Sir Edward Coke, "is but a little prick, so the matter of even the biggest business lies in a little room." So the "Sentences of the Seven" are said to be epitomes of whole systems of philosophy: which also Carlyle says is the case with many a homely proverb. Anyhow that famous Μηδὲν ἄγαν, the boundary law of Goodness itself, as of all other things, (if one could only know how to apply it,) brings one up with a wholesome halt every now and then, and no where more fitly than in a book of this kind, though, as usual, I am just now violating in the very act of vindicating it*.

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* These oracular Truisms are some of them as impracticable as more elaborate Truths. Who will do "too much" if he knows it *is* "too much?" "Know thyself" is far easier said than done; and might not a passage like the following make one suppose Shakspeare had Bacon in his eye as the original Polonius, if the dates tallied?

"He that seeketh victory over his nature, let him not set himself too great, nor too small, tasks; for the first will make him dejected by often failings, and the second will make him a small proceeder though by often prevailings. And at the first let him practise with helps, as swimmers do with bladders or rushes; but after a time let him practise with disadvantages, as dancers do with thick shoes. For it breeds great perfection if the practice be harder than the use. Where nature is mighty, and therefore the victory hard, the degrees had need be, first, to stay and arrest nature in time: like to him that would say over the four and twenty letters when he was angry; then to go less in quantity, as if one should, in forbearing wine, come from drinking healths to a draught at a meal," &c. [Essay 38.]

If all chance of controlling nature depended on advice like this! What *is* too great for a man's nature?—what too little? what *are* bladders, and what thick shoes? *when* is one to throw off one and take the other? He was a more effectual philosopher who thought of

The grand Truisms of life only life itself is said to bring to life. We hear them from grandam and nurse, write them in copy-books, but only understand them as years turn up occasions for practising or experiencing them. Nay, the longest and most eventful life scarce suffices to teach us the most important of all. It is Death, says Sir Walter Raleigh, "that puts into a man all the wisdom of the world without speaking a word." Only when we have to part with a thing do we feel its value—unless indeed *after* we have parted with it—a very serious consideration.

When Sir Walter Scott lay dying, he called for his son-in-law, and while the Tweed murmured through the woods, and a September sun lit up the towers, whose growth he had watched so eagerly, said to him, "Be a good man; only that can comfort you when you come to lie here!" "*Be a good man!*" To that threadbare Truism shrunk all that gorgeous tapestry of written and real Romance!

"You knew all this," wrote Johnson to Mrs Thrale, rallying for a little while from his final attack—"You knew all this, and I thought that I knew it too: but I know it now with a new conviction."

Perhaps, next to realizing all this in our own lives, (when just too late,) we become most sensible of it in reading the lives and deaths of others, such as Scott's and Johnson's; when we see all the years of life, with all their ambitions, loves, animosities, schemes of action—all the "curas supervacuas, spes inanes, et inexspectatos exitus hujus fugacissimæ vitæ"*—summed up in a volume or two; and what seemed so long a history to them, but a Winter's Tale to us.

Death itself was no Truism to Adam and Eve, nor to

repeating the alphabet when he was angry; though it is not every man who knows when he is that.

* [See Petrarch's Inscription in his Virgil.]

many of their successors, I suppose; nay, some of their very latest descendants, it is said, have doubted if it be an inevitable necessity of life: others, with more probability, whether a man can fully comprehend its inevitableness till life itself be half over; beginning to believe he must Die about the same time he begins to believe he is a Fool.

"As are the leaves on the trees, even so are man's generations;
This is the truest verse ever a poet has sung:
Nevertheless few hearing it hear; Hope, flattering alway,
Lives in the bosom of all—reigns in the blood of the Young."

"And why," says the note-book of one 'nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita,' "does one day still linger in my memory? I had started one fine October morning on a ramble through the villages that lie beside the Ouse. In high health and cloudless spirits, one regret perhaps hanging upon the horizon of the heart, I walked through Sharnbrook up the hill, and paused by the church on the summit to look about me. The sun shone, the clouds flew, the yellow trees shook in the wind, the river rippled in breadths of light and dark; rooks and daws wheeled and cawed aloft in the changing spaces of blue above the spire; the churchyard all still in the sunshine below."

Old Shallow was not very sensible of Death even when moralizing about old Double's—"Certain, 'tis very certain, Death, as the Psalmist saith, is certain to all—all shall die—How a good yoke of bullocks at Stamford fair?"

Could we but on our journey hear the Truisms of life called out to us, not by Chapone, Cogan, &c., but by such a voice as called out to Sir Lancelot and Sir Galahad, when they were about to part in the forest—"Thynke for to doo wel; for the one shall never see the other before the dredeful day of dome!"

Our ancestors were fond of such monitory Truisms inscribed upon dials, clocks, and fronts of buildings; as that of "Time and Tide tarry for no man," still to be seen on the Temple sundial; and that still sterner one I have read of, "Go about your business*"—not even moralizing upon me. I dare say those who came suddenly and unaware upon the Γνῶθι Σεαυτόν over the Delphian temple were brought to a stand for a while, some thrown back into themselves by it, others (and those probably much the greater number) seeing nothing at all in it.

The parapet balustrade round the roof of Castle Ashby, in Northamptonshire, is carved into the letters, "NISI DOMINUS CUSTODIAT DOMUM, FRUSTRA VIGILAT QUI CUSTODIT EAM." This is not amiss to decipher as you come up the long avenue some summer or autumn day, and to moralize upon afterwards at the little "Rose and Crown" at Yardley, if such good Homebrewed be there as used to be before I knew I was to die†.

We move away the grass from a tombstone, itself half buried, to get at any trite memento of mortality, where it preaches more to us than many new volumes of hot-pressed morals. Not but we can feel the warning whisper too, when

* [On St James's Church, Bury St Edmund's.]

† "A party of us were looking one autumn afternoon at a country church. Over the western door was a clock with, 'THE HOUR COMETH,' written in gold, upon it. Polonius proceeded to explain, rather lengthily, what a good inscription it was. 'But not very apposite,' said Rosencrantz, 'seeing the clock has stopped.' The sun was indeed setting, and the hands of the clock, glittering full in his face, pointed up to noon. Osric however, with a slight lisp, said the inscription was all the more apt, 'for the hour *would* come to the clock, instead of the clock following the hour.' On which Horatio, taking out his watch, (which he informed us was just then more correct than the sun,) told us that unless we set off home directly we should be late for dinner. That was one way of considering an Inscription."

Jeremy Taylor tells us that one day the bell shall toll, and it shall be asked, "For whom?" and answered, "For *us*."

Some of these Truisms come home to us also in the shape of old Proverbs, quickened by wit, fancy, rhyme, alliteration, &c. These have been well defined to be "the Wit of one and the Wisdom of many;" and are in some measure therefore historical indexes of the nation that originates or retains them. Our English Proverbs abound with good sense, energy, and courage, as compactly expressed as may be; making them properly enough the ready money of a people more apt to act than talk. "They drive the nail home in discourse," says Ray, "and clench it with the strongest conviction."

A thoughtful Frenchman says that nearly all which expresses any decided opinion has "quelque chose de métrique, ou de mesure." So as even so bare-faced a truism as "Of two evils choose the least," (superfluous reason, and no rhyme at all!) is not without its secret poetic charm. How much vain hesitation has it not cut short!

So that if Cogan and Chapone had not been made poetical by the gods, but only brief—

Sometimes indeed our old friend the Proverb gets too much clipt in his course of circulation: as in the case of that very important business to all Englishmen, a Cold—"STUFF A COLD AND STARVE A FEVER," has been grievously misconstrued, so as to bring on the fever it was meant to prevent.

Certainly Dr Johnson (who could hit hard too) not only did not always drive the nail home, but made it a nail of wax, which Fuller truly says you can't drive at all. "These sorrowful meditations," the Doctor says of Prince Rasselas, "fastened on his mind; he passed four months in resolving

to lose no more time in idle resolves; and was awakened to more vigorous exertion by hearing a maid, who had broken a porcelain cup, remark that 'what cannot be repaired is not to be regretted.'"

But perhaps this was a Maid of Honour. If so, however, it proves that Maids of Honour of Rasselas' court did not talk like those of George the Second's. Witness jolly Mary Bellenden's letters to Lady Suffolk.

Swift has a fashionable dialogue almost made up of vulgar adages, which I should have thought the Beaux and Belles left to the Mary Bellendens and Country Squires of his day—

"Grounding their fat faiths on old country proverbs."

Nor do I see any trace of it in the comedies of Congreve, Vanbrugh, &c.*

* I find in my "Complete Correspondent," which seems begotten by Dr Johnson on Miss Seward, the following advice about Proverbs. "STYLE. Vulgarity in language is a proof either of a mean education, or of associating with low company. Coarse Proverbial expressions furnish such with their choicest flowers of rhetoric. Instead of saying, 'Necessity compelled,' such an one would say, 'Needs must when the devil drives.' Such vulgar aphorisms ought especially to be rejected as border upon profaneness. A good writer would not say, 'It was all through you it happened,' but 'It happened through your inattention,'" &c.

This elegance of style however does not always mend the matter; as we read in Boswell that Dr Johnson, having set the company laughing by saying of some lady in the good English so natural to him, "She's good at bottom," tried to make them grave again by, "What's the laugh for? I say the woman is fundamentally good."

The following is one of Punch's jokes; I do not know if true of the author referred to—not true, I should suppose, of the class to which he belongs, (except as regards the foolish and vulgar use of French)—but

Erasmus says that the Proverb is "a nonnullis Græcorum," thus defined, λόγος ὠφέλιμος ἐν τῷ βίῳ, ἐν μετρίᾳ παρακρύψει πολὺ τὸ χρήσιμον ἔχων ἐν ἑαυτῷ. The definition, it might seem at first, rather of a Fable, or Parable, than a Proverb. But, beside that the titles of many fables *do* become proverbs—"Fox and Grapes," "Dog in Manger," &c., the title including the whole signification, (like those "Sentences of the Seven,")—so many of our best proverbs *are* little whole fables in themselves; as when we say, "The Fat sow knows not what the Lean one thinks," &c.

We are fantastic, histrionic creatures; having so much of the fool, loving a mixture of the lie, loving to get our fellow-creatures into our scrapes and make them play our parts—the Ass of our dulness, the Fox of our cunning, and so on—in whose several natures those of our Neighbours, as we think, come to a climax. Certainly, swollen Wealth is well enacted by the fat Sow reclining in her sty, as a Dowager in an opera-box, serenely unconscious of all her kindred's

very true of the Hammersmith education, of which my complete Letter-writer—Correspondent, I mean—is an exponent.

## DESULTORY REFLECTIONS.

BY LORD WILLIAM LENNOX.

INIQUITOUS intercourses contaminate proper habits.

One individual may pilfer a quadruped, where another may not cast his eyes over the boundary of a field.

In the absence of the feline race, the mice give themselves up to various pastimes.

Feathered bipeds of advanced age are not to be entrapped with the outer husks of corn.

Casualties will take place in the most excellently conducted family circles.

More confectioners than are absolutely necessary are apt to ruin the *potage*.—LENNOX'S *Lacon*.

leanness without. The phrase "rolling in wealth" too suggests the same fable.

Indeed, is not every Metaphor (without which we cannot speak five words) in some sort a Fable—one thing spoken of under the likeness of another? And how easy (if need were) it is to dramatize, for instance, Bacon's figure of discovering the depth, not by looking on the surface ever so long, but beginning to *sound* it!

And are these Fables so fabulous after all? If beasts do not really rise to the level on which we amuse ourselves by putting them, we have an easy way of really sinking to theirs. It is no fable surely that Circe *bodily* transformed the captives of Sensuality into apes, hogs, and goats; as Cunning, Hypocrisy, and Rapacity, graft us with the sharp noses, sidelong eyes, and stealthy gait, of wolves, hyænas, foxes, and serpents; sometimes, as in old fable too, the misfeatures and foul expressions of two baser animal passions—as lust and cunning for instance, with perhaps cruelty beside—conforming man into a double or triple monster, more hideous than any single beast. On the other hand, our more generous dispositions determine outwardly into the large aspect of the lion, or the horse's speaking eye and inspired nostril. "There are innumerable animals to which man may degrade his image, inward and outward; only a few to which he can properly (and that in the Affections only) level it: but it is an ideal and invisible type to which he must erect it."

"Such kind of parabolical wisdom," says Bacon, "was much more in use in the ancient times, as by the Fables of Æsop, and the brief Sentences of the Seven, and the use of hieroglyphics may appear. And the cause was, for that it was then of necessity to express any point of reason which was more sharp or subtle than the vulgar in that

manner, because men in those times wanted both variety of examples and subtlety of conceit; and as Hieroglyphics were before letters, so Parables were before arguments."

We cannot doubt that Christianity itself made way by means of such Parables as never were uttered before or after. Imagine (be it with reverence) that Jeremy Bentham had had the promulgation of it!

And as this figurative teaching was best for simple people, "even now," adds Bacon, "such Parables do retain much life and vigour, because Reason cannot be so sensible, nor examples so fit." Next to the Bible parables, I believe John Bunyan remains the most effective preacher, among the poor, to this day.

Nor is it only simple matters for simple people that admit such illustration*. Again, Bacon says, "It is a rule that whatsoever science is not consonant to presuppositions must pray in aid of Similitudes." "Neither Philosopher nor Historiographer," says Sir Philip Sidney, "could at the first have entered into the gates of popular judgments, if they had not taken a great Passport of Poetry," which deals so in Similitudes. "For he" (the poet) "doth not only show the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way as will

* Fable might be made to exemplify the syllogism, but not to illustrate it. "The Lion swore he would eat all flesh that came in his way. One day he set his paw on a Polecat: the Polecat pleaded that he was small, ill-flavoured, &c.; but the Lion said, 'I have sworn to eat all flesh that came in my way: you are flesh come in my way; therefore I will eat you.'" The syllogism is proved; but the speakers do not illustrate, but obscure it, but because it is a matter of *understanding*, of which no animal but man is the representative. Your Lion, noble beast as he is, is only to be trusted with an Enthymeme. One sees this fault in the Eastern fables. Birds and beasts are made to *reason*, instead of representing the passions and affections they really share with men. This also is the vital fault of Dryden's Hind and Panther.

entice any man to enter into it. Nay, he doth, as if your journey should lie through a fair vineyard, at the very first give you a cluster of grapes, that, full of that taste, you may long to pass further."

Who can doubt that Plato wins us to his Wisdom by that skin and body of Poetry in which Sir Philip declares his philosophy is clothed? Not the sententious oracle of one wise man, but evolved dramatically by many like ourselves. The scene opens in Old Athens, which his genius continues for us for ever new; the morning dawns; a breeze from the Ægæan flutters upon our foreheads; the rising sun tips the friezes of the Parthenon, and gradually slants upon the house in whose yet twilight courts gather a company of white-vested, whispering guests, "expecting till that fountain of wisdom," Protagoras, should arise.

Carlyle notices, as one of Goethe's chief gifts, "his emblematic intellect, his never-failing tendency to transform into *shape*, into *life*, the feeling that may dwell in him. Every thing has *form*, has visual existence; the poet's imagination *bodies forth* the forms of things unseen, and his pen turns them into shape." The same is, I believe, remarkable, probably *too* remarkable, in Richter: and is especially characteristic of Carlyle himself, who to a figurative genius, like Goethe's, adds a passion which Goethe either had not or chose to suppress, which brands the truth double-deep. And who can doubt that Bacon, could it possibly have been his own, would have clothed Bentham's bare argument with cloth of gold?

He says again, "Reasons plainly delivered, and always after one manner, especially with fine and fastidious minds, enter heavily and dully; whereas, if they be varied, and have more life and vigour put into them by these forms and imaginations, they carry a stronger apprehension, and many

times win the mind to a resolution." Which, if it be true in any matter, most of all surely in morals, for the most part so old, so trite, and, in this naughty world, so dull. Are not *all* minds grown "fine and fastidious" in these matters, apt to close against any but the most musical voice?

Which also (to join the snake's head and tail of this rambling overgrown Preface) may account, rightly or wrongly, for my rejection of those essayists aforesaid, (who crippled their native genius by a style which has left them "more of the ballast than the sail,") and my adoption of earlier and later writers. Not, as I said before, in copious draughts of their eloquence—and what pages of Bacon and Browne it is far easier to bear than forbear!—but where the writer has gone to the heart of a matter, the centre of the circle, hit the nail on the head and driven it home—Proverb-wise, in fact. For in proportion as any writer tells the truth, and tells it figuratively or poetically, and yet so as to lie in a nutshell, he cuts up sooner or later into proverbs shorter or longer, and gradually gets down into general circulation.

Some extracts are from note books, where the author's name was forgot; some from the conversation of friends that must alike remain anonymous; and some that glance but lightly at the truth are not without purpose inserted to relieve a book of dogmatic morals. "Durum et durum non faciunt murum."

And now Mountain opens and discovers—

POLONIUS.

## Introduction to Readings in Crabbe.

"Tales of the Hall," says the Poet's son and biographer, occupied his father during the years 1817, 1818, and were published by John Murray in the following year under the present title, which he suggested, instead of that of "Remembrances," which had been originally proposed.

The plan and nature of the work is thus described by the author himself in a letter written to his old friend, Mary Leadbetter, and dated October 30, 1817:

"I know not how to describe the new, and probably (most probably) the last work I shall publish. Though a village is the scene of meeting between my two principal characters, and gives occasion to other characters and relations in general, yet I no more describe the manners of village inhabitants. My people are of superior classes, though not the most elevated; and, with a few exceptions, are of educated and cultivated minds and habits. I do not know, on a general view, whether my tragic or lighter Tales, etc., are most in number. Of those equally well executed, the tragic will, I suppose, make the greater impression; but I know not that it requires more attention."

"The plan of the work," says Jeffrey, in a succinct, if not quite exact, epitome—"for it has more of plan and unity than any of Mr Crabbe's former productions—is abundantly simple. Two brothers, both past middle age, meet together, for the first time since their infancy, in the Hall of their native Parish, which the elder and richer had purchased as a place of retirement for his declining age; and there tell each other their own history, and then that of their guests, neighbours, and acquaintances. The senior is much the richer, and a bachelor—having been a little distasted with the sex by the unlucky result of a very extravagant passion. He is, moreover, rather too reserved, and somewhat Toryish, though with an excellent heart and a

powerful understanding. The younger is very sensible also, but more open, social, and talkative; a happy husband and father, with a tendency to Whiggism, and some notion of reform, and a disposition to think well both of men and women. The visit lasts two or three weeks in autumn; and the Tales are told in the after-dinner *têtes-à-têtes* that take place in that time between the worthy brothers over their bottle.

"The married man, however, wearies at length for his wife and children; and his brother lets him go with more coldness than he had expected. He goes with him a stage on the way; and, inviting him to turn aside a little to look at a new purchase he had made of a sweet farm with a neat mansion, he finds his wife and children comfortably settled there, and all ready to receive them; and speedily discovers that he is, by his brother's bounty, the proprietor of a fair domain within a morning's ride of the Hall, where they may discuss politics, and tell tales any afternoon they may think proper."—*Edinburgh Review*, 1819.

The Scene has also changed with Drama and Dramatis Personæ: no longer now the squalid purlieus of old, inhabited by paupers and ruffians, with the sea on one side, and as barren a heath on the other; in place of that, a village with its tidy homesteads and well-to-do tenants, scattered about an ancient Hall, in a well-wooded, well-watered, well-cultivated country, within easy reach of a thriving country town, and

"West of the waves, and just beyond the sound,"

of that old familiar sea, which (with all its sad associations) the Poet never liked to leave far behind him*.

When he wrote the letter above quoted (two years

* "It was, I think, in the summer of 1787, that my father" (then living in the Vale of Belvoir) "was seized, one fine summer's day, with so intense a longing to see the sea, from which he had never before been so long absent, that he mounted his horse, rode alone to the coast of Lincolnshire, sixty miles from his house, dipped in the waves that

before the publication of his book) he knew not whether his tragic exceeded the lighter stories in quantity, though he supposed they would leave the deeper impression on the reader. In the completed work I find the tragic stories fewer in number, and, to my thinking, assuredly not more impressive than such as are composed of that mingled yarn of grave and gay of which the kind of life he treats of is, I suppose, generally made up. "Nature's sternest Painter" may have mellowed with a prosperous old age, and from a comfortable grand-climacteric, liked to contemplate and represent a brighter aspect of humanity than his earlier life afforded him. Anyhow, he has here selected a subject whose character and circumstance require a lighter touch and shadow less dark than such as he formerly delineated.

Those who now tell their own as well as their neighbours' stories are much of the Poet's own age as well as condition of life, and look back (as he may have looked) with what Sir Walter Scott calls a kind of humorous retrospect over their own lives, cheerfully extending to others the same kindly indulgence which they solicit for themselves. The book, if I mistake not, deals rather with the follies than with the vices of men, with the comedy rather than the tragedy of life. Assuredly there is scarce anything of that brutal or sordid villainy*, of which one has more than enough in the Poet's earlier work. And even the more sombre subjects of the book are relieved by the colloquial intercourse of the narrators, which twines about every story, and, letting in occasional glimpses of the country

washed the beach of Aldborough, and returned to Stathern."—(From the Poet's Biography, written by his son.)

* I think, only one story of the baser sort—"Gretna Green"—a capital, if not agreeable, little drama in which all the characters defeat themselves by the very means they take to deceive others.

round, encircles them all with something of dramatic unity and interest, insomuch that of all the Poet's works this one alone does not leave a more or less melancholy impression upon me; and, as I am myself more than old enough to love the sunny side of the wall, is on that account, I do not say the best, but certainly that which best I like, of all his numerous offspring.

Such, however, is not the case, I think, with Crabbe's few readers, who, like Lord Byron, chiefly remember him by the sterner realities of his earlier work. Nay, quite recently Mr Leslie Stephen in that one of his admirable essays which analyses the Poet's peculiar genius says:

"The more humorous of these performances may be briefly dismissed. Crabbe possesses the faculty, but not in any eminent degree; his hand is a little heavy, and one must remember that Mr Tovell and his like were of the race who require to have a joke driven into their heads with a sledge-hammer. Once or twice we come upon a sketch which may help to explain Miss Austen's admiration. There is an old maid* devoted to china, and rejoicing in stuffed parrots and puppies, who might have been ridiculed by Emma Woodhouse; and a Parson who would have suited the Eltons admirably."

The spinster of the stuffed parrot indicates, I suppose, the heroine of "Procrastination" in another series of tales. But Miss Austen, I think, might also have admired another, although more sensible, spinster in these, who tells of her girlish and only love while living with the grandmother who maintained her gentility in the little town she lived in at the cost of such little economies as "would scarce a parrot keep;" and the story of the romantic friend who, having proved the vanity of human bliss by the supposed death of a young lover, has devoted herself to his memory, insomuch

* [Catherine Lloyd in the Parish Register, part III.]

that as she is one fine autumnal day protesting in her garden that, were he to be restored to her in all his youthful beauty, she would renounce the real rather than surrender the ideal Hero awaiting her elsewhere—behold him advancing toward her in the person of a prosperous, portly merchant, who reclaims, and, after some little hesitation on her part, retains her hand.

There is also an old Bachelor whom Miss Austen might have liked to hear recounting the matrimonial attempts which have resulted in the full enjoyment of single blessedness; his father's sarcastic indifference to the first, and the haughty defiance of the mother of the girl he first loved. And when the young lady's untimely death has settled that question, his own indifference to the bride his own mother has provided for him. And when that scheme has failed, and yet another after that, and the Bachelor feels himself secure in the consciousness of more than middle life having come upon him, his being captivated—and jilted—by a country Miss, toward whom he is so imperceptibly drawn at her father's house that

> "Time after time the maid went out and in,
> Ere love was yet beginning to begin;
> The first awakening proof, the early doubt,
> Rose from observing she went in and out."

Then there is a fair Widow, who, after wearing out one husband with her ruinous tantrums, finds herself all the happier for being denied them by a second. And when he too is dead, and the probationary year of mourning scarce expired, her scarce ambiguous refusal (followed by acceptance) of a third suitor, for whom she is now so gracefully wearing her weeds as to invite a fourth.

If "Love's Delay" be of a graver complexion, is there not some even graceful comedy in "Love's Natural Death";

some broad comedy—too true to be farce—in "William Bailey's" old housekeeper; and up and down the book surely many passages of gayer or graver humour; such as the Squire's satire on his own house and farm; his brother's account of the Vicar, whose daughter he married; the gallery of portraits in the "Cathedral Walk," besides many a shrewd remark so tersely put that I should call them epigram did not Mr Stephen think the Poet incapable of such; others so covertly implied as to remind one of old John Murray's remark on Mr Crabbe's conversation—that he said uncommon things in so common a way as to escape notice, though assuredly not the notice of so shrewd an observer as Mr Stephen if he cared to listen, or to read?

Nevertheless, with all my own partiality for this book, I must acknowledge that, while it shares with the Poet's other works in his characteristic disregard of form and diction—of all indeed that is now called "Art"—it is yet more chargeable with diffuseness, and even with some inconsistency of character and circumstance, for which the large canvas he had taken to work on, and perhaps some weariness in filling it up, may be in some measure accountable. So that, for one reason or another, but very few of Crabbe's few readers care to encounter the book. And hence this attempt of mine to entice them to it by an abstract, omitting some of the stories, retrenching others, either by excision of some parts, or the reduction of others into as concise prose as would comprehend the substance of much prosaic verse.

Not a very satisfactory sort of medley in any such case; I know not if more or less so where verse and prose are often so near akin. I see, too, that in some cases they are too patchily intermingled. But I have tried, though not always successfully, to keep them distinct, and to let the Poet run on by himself whenever in his better vein; in two

cases—that of the "Widow" and "Love's Natural Death"—without any interruption of my own, though not without large deductions from the author in the former story.

On the other hand, more than as many other stories have shrunk under my hands into seeming disproportion with the Prologue by which the Poet introduces them, insomuch as they might almost as well have been cancelled were it not for carrying their introduction away with them*.

And such alterations have occasionally necessitated a change in some initial article or particle connecting two originally separated paragraphs; of which I subjoin a list†, as also of a few that have inadvertently crept into the text from the margin of my copy; all, I thought, crossed out before going to press. For any poetaster can amend many a careless expression which blemishes a passage that none but a poet could indite.

I have occasionally transposed the original text, especially when I thought to make the narrative run clearer by so doing. For in that respect, whether from lack or laxity of constructive skill, Crabbe is apt to wander and lose himself and his reader. This was shown especially in some prose novels, which at one time he tried his hand on, and (his son tells us), under good advice, committed to the fire.

I have replaced in the text some readings from the Poet's original MS. quoted in his son's standard edition, several of which appeared to me fresher, terser, and (as so often the case) more apt than the second thought afterward adopted‡.

* As "Richard's Jealousy," "Sir Owen Dale's Revenge," the "Cathedral Walk," in which the Poet's diffuse treatment seemed to me scarcely compensated by the interest of the story.

† [Omitted in this reprint.]

‡ A curious instance occurs in that fair Widow's story, when the original

Mr Stephen has said—and surely said well—that, with all its short and long-comings, Crabbe's better work leaves its mark on the reader's mind and memory as only the work of genius can, while so many a more splendid vision of the fancy slips away, leaving scarce a wrack behind. If this abiding impression result (as perhaps in the case of Richardson or Wordsworth) from being, as it were, soaked in through the longer process by which the man's peculiar genius works, any abridgement, whether of omission or epitome, will diminish from the effect of the whole. But, on the other hand, it may serve, as I have said, to attract a reader to an original, which, as appears in this case, scarce anybody now cares to venture upon in its integrity.

I feel bound to make all apology for thus dealing with a Poet whose works are ignored, even if his name be known, by the readers and writers of the present generation. "Pope in worsted stockings," he has been called. But, in truth, the comparison, such as it is, scarcely reaches beyond Crabbe's earliest essays. For in "The Village," which first made him popular, he set out with Goldsmith rather than with Pope, though toward a very different object than "Sweet Auburn." And then, after nearly twenty years' silence (a rare interval for a successful author), appeared a volume of "Tales"; and after them the "Parish Register," accompanied with "Sir Eustace Grey", and by-and-by followed by "The Borough": in all of which the style differed as much from that of Pope as the character and scene they

> "Would you believe it, Richard, that fair she
> Has had three husbands? I repeat it, three!"

is supplanted by the very enigmatical couplet:

> "No need of pity, when the gentle dame
> Has thrice resign'd and re-assumed her name."

treated of from the Wits and Courtiers of Twickenham and Hampton Court. But all so sharply delineated as to make Lord Byron, according to the comprehensive and comfortable form of decision that is never out of date, pronounce him to be Nature's best, if sternest, painter.

In the present "Tales of the Hall," the poet, as I have said, has in some measure shifted his ground, and Comedy, whose shrewder—not to say more sardonic—element ran through his earlier work, here discovers something of her lighter humour. Not that the Poet's old Tragic power, whether of Terror or Pity, is either absent or abated; as witness the story of "Ruth"; and that of "The Sisters," of whom one, with the simple piety that has held her up against the storm which has overtaken them both, devotes herself to the care of her whom it has bewildered, as she wanders alone in the deepening gloom of evening,

"Or cries at mid-day, 'Then Good-night to all!'"

And to prove how the Poet's landscape hand has not slackened in its cunning, we may accompany the Brothers in their morning ramble to the farm; or Richard on his horse to the neighbouring town; or at a respectful distance observe those two spinsters conversing in their garden on that so still autumnal day,

"When the wing'd insect settled in our sight,
And waited wind to recommence her flight,"

till interrupted by the very substantial apparition of him who ought long ago to have been a Spirit in heaven.

But "Tragedy, Comedy, Pastoral," all that, applauded as it was by contemporary critics and representatives of literature, contributed to make this writer generally read in the first quarter of this century, has left of him to the

present generation but the empty echo of a name, unless such as may recall the

"John Richard William Alexander Dwyer"

of the "Rejected Addresses." Miss Austen, indeed, who is still so much renowned for her representation of genteel humanity, was so unaccountably smitten with Crabbe in his worsted hose, that she playfully declared she would not refuse him for her husband. That Sir Walter Scott, with his wider experience of mankind, could listen to the reading of him when no longer able to hold the book for himself, may pass for little in these days when the Lammermoors and Midlothians are almost as much eclipsed by modern fiction as "The Lady of the Lake" and "Marmion" by the poetic revelations which have extinguished Crabbe. Nevertheless, among the many obsolete authorities of yesterday, there is yet one—William Wordsworth—who now rules, where once he was least, among the sacred Brotherhood to which he was exclusive enough in admitting others, and far too honest to make any exception out of compliment to anyone on any occasion; he did, nevertheless, thus write to the Poet's son and biographer in 1834: "Any testimony from me to the merit of your revered father's works would, I feel, be superfluous, if not impertinent. They will last, from their combined merits as poetry and truth, full as long as anything that has been expressed in verse since they first made their appearance"—a period which, be it noted, includes all Wordsworth's own volumes except "Yarrow Revisited," "The Prelude," and "The Borderers." And Wordsworth's living successor to the laurel no less participates with him in his appreciation of their forgotten brother. Almost the last time I met him he was quoting from memory that fine passage in "Delay has Danger," where the late autumn

landscape seems to borrow from the conscience-stricken lover who gazes on it the gloom which it reflects upon him; and in the course of further conversation on the subject, Mr Tennyson added, "Crabbe has a world of his own;" by virtue of that original genius, I suppose, which is said to entitle, and carry, the possessor to what we call Immortality.

Mr Mozley, in his "Recollections of Oriel College," has told us that Cardinal Newman was a great reader of Crabbe in those earlier days; and the Cardinal himself, in one of his "Addresses to the Catholics of Dublin," published in 1873, tells us that so he continued to be, and, for one reason, *why*. For in treating of what may be called his Ideal of a University, he speaks of the insufficiency of mere Book-learning toward the making of a Man, as compared with that which the Richard of these "Tales" unconsciously gathered in the sea-faring village where his boyhood passed; and where—not from books (of which he had scarce more than a fisherman's cottage supplied), but from the seamen on the shore, and the solitary shepherd on the heath, and a pious mother at home—"he contrived to fashion a philosophy and poetry of his own;" which, followed as it was by an active life on land and sea, made of him the man whom his more educated and prosperous brother contemplated with mingled self-regret and pride. And the poem in which this is told is considered by Cardinal Newman as, "whether for conception or execution, one of the most touching in our language," which having read "on its first publication with extreme delight," and again, thirty years after, with even more emotion, and yet again, twenty years after *that*, with undiminished interest: he concludes by saying that "a work which can please in youth and age seems to fulfil (in logical language) the *accidental* definition of a classic."

For a notice of this passage (which may be read at large in Cardinal Newman's sixth Discourse delivered to the Catholics of Dublin, p. 150, Edit. 1873) I am indebted to Mr Leslie Stephen, against whom I ventured to break a lance, and who has thus supplied me with one that recoils upon myself for having mutilated a poem which so great an authority looks on as so perfect.

[*June*, 1883.]

### Written by Petrarch in his Virgil.

Laura, illustrious in herself, and long celebrated in my verse, first dawned upon my eyes, while I was yet a youth, at the Church of St Clara in Avignon, in the year of our Lord 1327, on the 6th of April, at daybreak. And in that same City, in that same month of April, and that same morning hour, of the year 1348, was that fairer light from the light of day withdrawn, I being then at Verona, alas! unconscious of my loss.

Her most fair and chaste body was deposited on the evening of the day of her death in the cemetery of the Minor Brothers. For her soul, I am persuaded (as Seneca was of Africanus) that it is returned to the Heaven whence it came.

I have been constrained by a kind of sad satisfaction to inscribe this memorial in a book which the most frequently comes under my eyes; to warn me there is nothing more to engross me in this world, and that, the one great tie being broken, it is time to think of quitting Babylon for ever. And this, I trust, with the Grace of God, will not be difficult to one who constantly and manfully contemplates the vain anxieties, empty hopes, and unexpected issues of his foregone life.

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